SCIENTIFIC GLEANINGS FROM VEDIC MYTHOLOGY

No. 1. SOME ASPECTS OF ELECTRICITY

Mentioned in the Vedas and Sanskrit Literature.

"वेदालङ्कार पदभूषितानां श्री पं० प्रियव्रत-महोदयानां करकमलयोः पुस्तिकेयं सादरं समर्प्यते हंसराजेन ... समालोचनार्थम्
१३ कार्त्तिक,
संवत् १९९८ ॥

Svāmī Bhūmānanda Sarasvatī.

Price Re. 1/-

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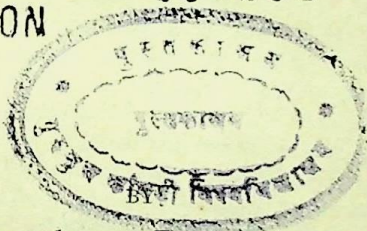
BY

Śrī Paramahaṃsa Parivrājakācārya

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PREFACE.

This brochure embraces a few of the different notes I have been able to make from the Vedas and Vedic and general classical Sanskrit works on various scientific topics. The main purpose of these notes is to determine the real sense of such disputed words as, अप्सरस्, गन्धर्व, उर्वशी, पुरूरवस्, etc., which originally occur in the Vedas and which have given rise to many legends in the Brāhmaṇas and the Purāṇas I do not intend in this little preface to anticipate the conclusions arrived at in the body of the brochure, but I should like to suggest—just suggest—here that from a careful study of my notes I could not but arrive at the conclusion that all the texts concerned, treated of the sources and methods of production of electricity. It is true I started collecting notes to dig up and study some of the scientific principles of which the Vedas are believed to be the great repositories, but these particular notes put together in this booklet, chiefly concerned my solicitude to ascertain the true sense of the words अप्सरस्, गन्धर्व etc. I was not at all prepared to follow the line the booklet has taken, but a deeper study of the stray notes forced that line on me.

The purpose of true research is to discover truths that would contribute to the welfare of humanity at large, and neither to amass wealth or to acquire power and popularity. Wealth and power are secondary as they do not form the staple on which human life thrives. True and correct knowledge is far superior to any sort of wealth or power, nay, such knowledge itself is the greatest wealth and power.

Vedic Literature is an unfathomable ocean of true scientific knowledge and the joy of him who dives deep into it and emerges with a precious gem from it, knows no bounds. It is a great and good pursuit, its own reward.

Lahore,
28th October 1940. — Svāmī Bhūmānanda Sarasvatī.

ॐ

SCIENTIFIC GLEANINGS FROM VEDIC[1] MYTHOLOGY.

SOME ASPECTS OF ELECTRICITY MENTIONED IN THE VEDAS AND SANSKRIT LITERATURE.

Definition of 'myth'.

A myth is defined as a "purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons etc., and embodying popular ideas on natural phenomena etc,"[2] and mythology therefore, is the science that institutes an enquiry into the origin and nature of such myths. The most phantastic and fascinating of the world's myths have sprung around certain Vedic ideas and terms and Vedic mythology deals with these.

The purpose of these myths is to explain Vedic terms and ideas.

When these Vedic ideas and terms started gather ng such myths around them is impossible now to state with any certainty, but their *raison d'etre* is certainly the ever-present popular demand in Bhāratavarṣa for intelligent and intelligible interpretations of Vedic teachings.

1. 'Vedic' means the language and style used in the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtra literature. It is in this sense that the grammarian Patañjali, for example, uses the word वेदे in his Mahābhāṣya. वेदे according to him and many other ancient Āryan savants means, 'in the Vedic language or style,' as opposed to लोके, 'in the classical' or 'modern Sanskrit language or style'; and not 'in the Vedas' or 'in the world' as presumed by some modern scholars.

2. The Oxford Dictionary.

Hence they form the staple of a certain method of Vedic exegesis called 'historical'.[3] 'Quickwitted' ancient scholars invented these myths to meet the popular demand for the explanation of Vedic teachings and they well served their purpose in their own time, but later on all attention came to be focussed only on them their original purpose having been entirely lost sight of. Consequently a time came when, instead of serving their laudable purpose of explaining Vedic texts they became the greatest stumbling blocks in the way of understanding them. Here mythology originated to sift these myths and arrive at their central truths.

Etymology of words is essential in Vedic research.

As the purpose of these legends is to explain Vedic terms and ideas it is the business of Vedic mythology to sift all material available on these, and explore all avenues that would lead to an understanding of their true nature. Hence scientific, rational etymology of terms is very useful as a first step towards this and must not be neglected as wrongly done by certain scholars[4]. The

3. There seem to have been prevalent in ancient Bhāratavarṣa several methods of Vedic exegesis, e. g , the etymological नैरुक्त sponsored by Yāska, scientific वैज्ञानिक esoteric गूढ़ or रहस्यमय, mythical ऐतिहासिक criticised by him in his Nirukta with the remark, इति ऐतिहासिकाः, etc.

4. "In the earlier period of Vedic studies there was a tendency to begin research at the wrong end. The *etymological equations* were then made the *starting point*. These identifications, though now mostly rejected, have continued to influence unduly the interpretation of the *mythological creations of the Veda.*" Macdonell's "Vedic Mythology," Trübner, Germany 1897. (Italics ours). The nature of what this objector calls 'etymological equations' is usually such that they cannot but form the starting

innate peculiar genius of the Vedic language and style is such that etymologies of important and difficult words cannot but be carefully noted unless the schola intends giving a wide berth to all trustworthy ancient tradition on linguistic essentials and chalking out his own wayward course.

The word 'Apsaras'. Etymology of—

The words 'Apsaras', 'Gandharva', 'Urvaśī,' 'Purūravas', 'Menakā', 'Pañcacūdā', 'Nārada' etc., all, more or less correlated, have been prolific in interesting myths well known to all acquainted with Sanskrit literature.

It is proposed to determine the real signification of these Vedic words here by sifting the material available in the form of myths etc. Of these, the first, viz., 'Apsaras' is by far the most important and from its etymology[6] connotes something 'pervading, moving

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point in any literary discussion. Hence the objection is unfair. The writer presumes that the Vedas themselves have created the myths. This is presuming too much, for the terminology of the Vedas of which the objector has a poor knowledge, concerns plain scientific truths observed in everyday life. It is not good to start an enquiry with a prejudiced mind.

5. Nārada does not seem to be quite a Vedic term for it occurs only 6 times in the Atharvaveda (V. 19,9 XII, 4, 16; 24; 41; 42; and 45, if the word lists available in the market are correct), thrice in the nominative case and thrice in the vocative, but in a sense entirely irrelevant to our enquiry.

6. i. अप्सु जलेषु सरतीति अथवा सर्तुं शीलमस्या अस्तीति= अप् + √सृ + असि, U. IV, 239 सरतेरप्पूर्वादसिः=अप्सरस्. "अप्सरा अप्सारिणी, अपि वाप्स इति रूपनामाप्सातेरप्सानीयं भवत्यादर्शनीयं, व्यापनीयं वा, स्पष्टं दर्शनायेति शाकपूणिः। यदप्स इत्यभक्तस्य अप्सो नाम इति व्यापिनः। तद्रा भवति रूपवती तदनयात्तमिति वा तदस्यै

occupying etc., some place or thing'. This point must not be overlooked for it will serve a very ood purpose in tackling with the available tradition.

The word 'Apsaras' in the Vedas.

In the Yajurveda Chapter XV we have a very interesting statement in five stanzas, viz., from stanza 15 to 19, the details of which can be arranged in the form of a statement as follows :—

(St. 15) i. अयं पुरः .... this gives the direction.
ii. सूर्यरश्मिः हरिकेशः ... ... गन्धर्वः.
iii. रथगृत्सः रथौजाः .... सेनानीग्रामण्यौ.
iv. पुञ्जिकस्थला क्रतुस्थला ... ... अप्सरसौ.
v. दंद्दणवः पशवः ... ... हेतिः.
vi. पौरुषेयः वधः ... . प्रहेतिः.
vii. तेभ्यः नमः अस्तु ... ... salutaion.
viii. ते नः अवन्तु ..दध्म .... wish.

Item no. ii in the above statement mentions the 'Gandharva' though the text does not expressly say so. By metaphor 'Gandharva' here means the king, senānīgrāmaṇyau his officers, apsarasau his policy, hetiḥ. prahetiḥ his means and the salutation and wish are the re-iterating burden. We now give the items of the other stanzas :— (16) i. दक्षिणा. ii. विश्वकर्मा. iii. रथस्वनः, रथेचित्रः. iv. मेनका, सहजन्या.

दत्तमिति वा ॥१३॥ तस्या दर्शनात्मित्रावरुणयो रेतश्चस्कन्द"॥१४॥ Nir. V.

ii. अप्सम् रूपमस्या अस्तीति = अप्स + र (= मतुप्) according to P. V. 2. 94 तदस्यास्त्यस्मिन्निति मतुप् + टाप् = अप्सरा.

iii. अप्सम् रूपम् आत्तम् गृहीतम् यया अथवा दत्तम् यस्यै सा = अप्स + √रा दाने + अ + टाप् = अप्सरा.

iv. आप्नोति = व्याप्नोतीति √आप्लृ व्याप्तौ + क्विप् = आपः = उदकम् तस्मिन् सरतीति + अप् + √सृ + अच् + टाप् = अप्सरा.

v. यातुधानः. vi. रक्षांसि. (17) i. पश्चात्. ii. विश्वव्यचाः. iii. रथप्रोतः, असमरथः. iv. प्रम्लोचन्ती, अनुम्लोचन्ती. v. व्याघ्राः. vi. सर्पाः. (18) i. उत्तरात्. ii. संयद्वसुः,. iii. तार्क्ष्यः, अरिष्टनेमिः. iv. विश्वाची, घृताची. v. आपः. vi. वातः (19) i. उपरि. ii. अर्वाग्वसुः. iii. सेनजित्, सुषेणः. iv. उर्वशी, पूर्वचित्तिः. v. अवस्फूर्जत्. vi. विद्युत्.

The 17th stanza, for example, translates thus:—"This from the west pervading all directions with sudden quickness is (apsarasau) the lightning of the rainy season with its double water-yielding force, (pramlocantī) the foreflash that causes the cloud to shower and (anumlocantī) the after-flash that accelerates the shower. During the two months of Śrāvaṇa and Bhādrapada[7] of this season ample means of enjoyment and objects of unrivalled charm are the two leading preventive and unifying features in all the products of Nature. In the same manner, this monarch, soon after he is accepted by the subjects pervades all the quarters with his sanction. The brave soldier capable of managing a large number of chariots and the opulent man possessing unrivalled means of happiness are the leaders of his forces and rural assembly. His two-fold policy that has a hold on the subjects consists in educating them in the Eternal Vedic Law and affording them means favourable to its adoption in life, for even the tigers can become his tools and the serpents still more powerful means for accomplishing his purpose"[8].

7. The Śrāvaṇa falls somewhere in July-August, and the Bhādrapada in August-September.

8. अयं पुरो हरिकेशः सूर्यरश्मिस्तस्य रथगृत्सश्च रथौजाश्च सेनानीग्रामण्यौ। पुञ्जिकस्थला च क्रतुस्थला चाप्सरसौ दङ्क्ष्णवः पशवो हेतिः पौरुषेयो वधः प्रहेतिस्तेभ्यो नमोऽ अस्तु ते नोऽवन्तु ते नो मृडयन्तु ते यं वयं द्विष्मो यश्च नो द्वेष्टि तमेषां जम्भे दध्मः ॥१५॥ अयं दक्षिणा

The above five stanzas refer to five seasons merging Frost into the Winter according to Aitareya Brāhmaṇa I. 1, 'pañcartavaḥ hemantaśiśirayoḥ samāsena' i-e., "the seasons are five taking the Winter and the Frost together as one."

विश्वकर्मा तस्य रथस्वनश्च रथेचित्रश्च सेनानीग्रामण्यौ । मेनका च सहजन्या चाप्सरसौ यातुधाना हेती रक्षांसि प्रहेतिस्तेभ्यः etc. ॥१६॥ अयं पश्चाद्विश्वव्यचास्तस्य रथप्रोतश्चासमरथश्च सेनानीग्रामण्यौ । प्रम्लोचन्ती चानुम्लोचन्ती चाप्सरसौ व्याघ्रा हेतिः सर्पाः प्रहेतिस्तेभ्यः etc. ॥१७॥ अयमुत्तरात्संयद्वसुस्तस्य तार्क्ष्यश्चारिष्टनेमिश्च सेनानीग्रामण्यौ । विश्वाची च घृताची चाप्सरसावापो हेतिर्वातः प्रहेतिस्तेभ्यः etc. ॥१८॥ अयमुपर्यर्वाग्वसुस्तस्य सेनजिच्च सुषेणश्च सेनानीग्रामण्यौ । उर्वशी च पूर्वचित्तिश्चाप्सरसाववस्फूर्जन्हेतिर्विद्युत्प्रहेतिस्तेभ्यः etc. ॥१९॥

The above passage mentions ten Apsarases :—(1) पुञ्जिकस्थला; (2) क्रतुस्थला; (3) मेनका; (4) सहजन्या; (5) प्रम्लोचन्ती; (6) अनुम्लोचन्ती; (7) विश्वाची; (8) घृताची; (9) उर्वशी and (10) पूर्वचित्ति. The Vāyupurāṇa Part I, Ch. 52 Stt. 1—23 mentions the following fourteen:—(1) क्रतुस्थला; (2) पुञ्जिकस्थली, (3) मेनका, (4) सहजन्या, (5) प्रम्लोचा, (6) निम्लोचा, (7) विश्वाची, (8) घृताची, (9) उर्वशी, (10) विप्रचित्ति, (11) तिलोत्तमा, (12) देवी, (13) रम्भा, and (14) मनोरमा. Vide n. (23).

The following is from the Mahabhārata Ādiparvan, Ch. 132. :—

अनूचानानवद्या च गुणमुख्या गुणावरा । अद्रिका च तथा सोमा मिश्रकेशी त्वलम्बुषा ॥४३॥ मरीचिः शुचिका चैव विद्युत्पर्णा तिलोत्तमा । अम्बिका लक्षणा क्षेमा देवी रम्भा मनोरमा ॥४४॥ असिता च सुबाहुश्च सुप्रिया च वपुस्तथा । पुण्डरीका सुगन्धा च सुरसा च प्रमाथिनी ॥४५॥ काम्या शारद्वती चैव ननृतुस्तत्र संघशः । मेनका सहजन्या च कर्णिका पुञ्जिकस्थला ॥४६॥ क्रतुस्थला घृताची च विश्वाची पूर्वचित्त्यपि । उम्लोचेति च विख्याता प्रम्लोचेति च ता दश ॥४७॥ उर्वश्यैकादशी तासां जगुश्चायतलोचनाः ।............॥४८॥

In a similar description[9] of the five seasons in Ch. XVIII, stanzas 38-43 we have the following details clearly given :—

St. 38. i. ऋताषाट् ऋतधामा अग्निः..........गन्धर्वः
ii. ओषधयः...........तस्य मुदो नाम अप्सरसः
iii. स नः.........स्वाहा.........wish.
St. 39. i. संहितः विश्वव्यचाः सूर्यः..........गन्धर्वः
ii. मरीचयः.........तस्य आयुवः नाम अप्सरसः.
iii. Burden as before.
St. 40. i. सुषुम्णः सूर्यरश्मिः चन्द्रमाः........गन्धर्वः.
ii. नक्षत्राणि.........तस्य भेकुरयः नाम अप्सरसः,

Are अनुम्लोचा, निम्लोचा and उम्लोचा the names of one and the same Apsaras? Why this inaccuracy? True accounts tally but fabrications never. See पूर्वचित्ति and विप्रचित्ति also. These tales were concocted to explain scientific principles taught in the Vedas. Vide nn. 21 and 59.

9. ऋताषाडृतधामाग्निर्गन्धर्वस्तस्यौषधयोऽप्सरसो मुदो नाम । स न इदं ब्रह्म क्षत्रं पातु तस्मै स्वाहा वाट् ताभ्यः स्वाहा ॥३८॥ संहितो विश्वसामा सूर्यो गन्धर्वस्तस्य मरीचयोऽप्सरस आयुवो नाम । स न इदम् etc.......॥३९॥ सुषुम्णः सूर्यरश्मिश्चन्द्रमा गन्धर्वस्तस्य नक्षत्राण्यप्सरसो भेकुरयो नाम । स न इदम् etc.......॥४०॥ इषिरो विश्वव्यचा वातो गन्धर्वस्तस्यापोऽ अप्सरसऽ ऊर्जो नाम । स न इदम् etc.........४१॥ भुज्युः सुपर्णो यज्ञो गन्धर्वस्तस्य दक्षिणाऽ अप्सरस स्तावा नाम । स नऽ इदम् etc.........॥४२॥ प्रजापतिर्विश्वकर्मा मनो गन्धर्वस्तस्यऽ ऋक्सामान्यप्सरसऽ एष्टयो नाम । स न इदम् etc. ॥४३॥

St. 40 quoted above mentions नक्षत्राणि—planets which are reputed to be 27. Vide note 53 and text. The Vāyupurāṇa has:—सप्तविंशतिरिन्दोस्तु दाक्षायिण्यो महाव्रताः । ददौ प्राचेतसो दक्षो नक्षत्राणीति या विदुः ॥ II, 28, 21.

St. 41. i. इषिरः विश्वव्यचाः वातः.........गन्धर्वः.
ii. आपः.........तस्य ऊर्जः नाम अप्सरसः.
St. 42. i. भुज्युः सुपर्णः यज्ञः.........गन्धर्वः.
ii. दक्षिणाः.........तस्य स्तावा नाम अप्सरसः.
St. 43. i. प्रजापतिः विश्वकर्मा मनः[10]......गन्धर्वः.
ii. ऋक्सामानि[10].........तस्य एष्टयः नाम अप्सरसः.

This lengthy but beautiful text expressly uses the terms Gandharva and Apsaras and it would seem that they are fluid terms the import of which is to be determined from the context but really it is not so. Their use here is metaphorical, for through the thin veil of the extended use of these expressions by way of figure of speech, we see peeping out their original 'intendments' the cloud and the lightning.

In these descriptions, in other words, the word gandharva means something 'supporting, sustaining or upholding like the sun or being filled with or discharging like the cloud,' and apsaras means something 'spreading, pervading, flowing like the sun's rays or flowing or pouring water by its sudden contact like the lightning', i. e., the idea of the cloud and lightning is clearly visible from behind the veil. In more than fifty percent of these texts it would be quite possible to render the word apsaras by lightning and gandharva by cloud directly, though on other grounds the translator may interpret them otherwise.

10. प्रजापतिस्तन्मनः ।। Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa I, 33, 2. यः प्रजापतिस्तन्मनः ।। Śāṅkhāyana Br. X, 1; XXVI, 3; XXVII, 5. Sāma Vidhāna Br. I, 1, 1. See also Taittirīya Br. II, 2, 1, 2; III, 7, 1. 2; Śatapatha Br. IV, 1, 1, 22; VIII, 5, 2, 2; Aitareya Br. V, 25.

Vide also Y. V. XXXIV, 5 :—यस्मिन्नृचः साम यजूंषि यस्मिन्प्रतिष्ठिता रथनाभाविवाराः । यस्मिञ्श्चित्तं सर्वमोतं प्रजानां तन्मे मनः शिवसंकल्पमस्तु ।।

In the Atharvaveda II, 2, 3-5,[11] the word 'Apsaras' can be rendered into 'the lightning, the sun's rays,' or 'watery vapour.' The Apsaras are there called गन्धर्वपत्नीः—wives of the Gandharvas, (st.5), are said to have their सदनम्—abode, in the समुद्रम्—atmospheric region, अभ्रिये नक्षत्रिये—in the cloud and the stars (st. 4), and सद्यः आ च परा च यन्ति—'to move hither and thither quickly' (st. 3).

From the association of the word समुद्र meaning अन्तरिक्ष, and अभ्रिये नक्षत्रिये in the cloud and the stars, we cannot but interpret Apsaras as lightning (vidyut, madhyamasthānā), and while in construction with 'Gandharva' meaning the sun, we have to translate it by 'the sun's rays' (dyusthānā).

In AV. IV 37 and XIX, 36, 6, the words 'Apsaras' and 'Gandharva' mean the 'miasmata' or 'germs of epidemic disease'—रक्षस् which also have the power to spread, pervade or get diffused quickly over a wide area. Their forms and shapes (—śvā, kapiḥ., etc.), their habitat (—aśvattha, nyagrodha), are described and herbal remedies (—ajasṛngī—'Odina Wodier,' aukṣagandhiḥ etc.) to check or forestall their

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11. अनवद्याभिः समु जग्म आभिरप्सरास्वपि गन्धर्व आसीत्। समुद्र आसां सदनम्म आहुर्यतः सद्यः आ च परा च यन्ति ॥३॥ अभ्रिये दिद्युन्नक्षत्रिये या विश्वावसुं गन्धर्वं सचध्वे। ताभ्यो वो देवीर्नम इत्कृणोमि ॥४॥ याः क्लन्दस्तमीषिचयोऽक्षकामा मनोमुहः। ताभ्यो गन्धर्वपत्नीभ्योऽप्सराभ्योऽकरं नमः ॥ अथर्व० २।२।५॥

The fifth stanza can be translated thus—"I have to admire the phenomenon of lightning the natural concomitant of the cloud, that causes commotion with its flash, and that (by causing shower of rain), fulfills the desires of creatures, is longed after by their senses, and is fascinating to their hearts."

spread, are prescribed.[12] In VIII, 5, 13[13] the use of a medicated 'gem' next to the person is said to render 'Apsarases' and 'Gandharvas' immune. In the 50th[14] stanza of the first hymn of the twelfth book of the Atharvaveda--the deservingly famous "Hymn to the Earth," along with the 'kimīdinaḥ' and 'piśācāḥ', Gandharvas and Apsarases also are called 'rakṣāṃsi, and protection from them is sought.

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12. त्वया पूर्वमथर्वाणो जघ्नू रक्षांस्योषधे । त्वया जघान कश्यपस्त्वया कण्वो अगस्त्यः ॥१॥ त्वया वयमप्सरसो गन्धर्वांश्चातयामहे । अजश्रृङ्ग्यज रक्षः सर्वान्गन्धेन नाशय ॥२॥ नदीं यन्त्वप्सरसोऽपां तारमवश्वसम् । गुल्गुलूः पीला नलद्यौक्षगन्धिः प्रमन्दनी । तत्परेताप्सरसः प्रतिबुद्धा अभूतन ॥३॥ यत्राश्वत्था न्यग्रोधा महावृक्षा शिखण्डिनः । तत्परेताप्सरसः प्रति बुद्धा अभूतन ॥४॥ यत्र वः प्रेङ्खा हरिता अर्जुना उत यत्राघाटाः कर्कर्यः संवदन्ति । तत्परेताप्सरसः प्रति बुद्धा अभूतन ॥५॥ एयमगन्नोषधीनां वीरुधां वीर्यावती । अजश्रृङ्ग्यराटकी तीक्ष्णश्रृङ्गी व्यृषतु ॥६॥ आनृत्यतः शिखण्डिनो गन्धर्वस्याप्सरापतेः । भिनद्मि मुष्कावपि यामि शेपः ॥७॥ भीमा इन्द्रस्य हेतयः शतभृष्टीरयस्मयीः । ताभिर्हविरदान्गन्धर्वानवकादान्व्यृषतु ॥८॥ भीमा इन्द्रस्य हेतयः शतमृष्टीर्हिरण्ययीः । ताभिर्हविरदान्गन्धर्वानवकादान्व्यृषतु ॥९॥ अवकादानभिशोचानप्सु ज्योतय मामकान् । पिशाचान्सर्वानोषधे प्रमृणीहि सहस्व च ॥१०॥ श्वेवैकः कपिरेवैकः कुमारः सर्वकेशकः । प्रियो दृश इव भूत्वा गन्धर्वः सचते स्त्रियम् तमितो नाशयामसि ब्रह्मणा वीर्यावता ॥११॥ जाया इद्वोऽप्सरसो गन्धर्वाः पतयो यूयम् । अप धावतामर्त्या मर्त्यान्मा सचध्वम् ॥१२॥ AV. IV, 37.

Stanza 8 mentions iron, and 9 gold, as germicides.

13. नैनं घ्नन्त्यप्सरसो न गन्धर्वा न मर्त्याः । सर्वा दिशो विराजति यो बिभर्तीमम् मणिम् ॥ AV. VIII, 5, 13.

14. ये गन्धर्वा अप्सरसो येचारायाः किमीदिनः । पिशाचान्त्सर्वा रक्षांसि तानस्मद्भूमे यावय ॥ AV. XII, 1, 50.

In AV.VI, 111, 4; 130, 1[15], Apsaras means 'vitality', 'electricity' or 'energy' and in 118, 1[16] it means the 'sun's rays'.

In RV, X, 10, 4[17] and 11, 2 Apsar ses are called 'apyāḥ yoṣāḥ' (=water nymphs). In IX, 78, 3[18] we have the clear expression 'samudriyāḥ apsarasaḥ = 'lightning flashes in the atmospheric region'. In X, 123, 5[19] the Apsarā is said to smile at the sun, 'jāram upa sișmiyāṇā' (jāram=the we rer out or dissolver of the cloud, vide, ahalyāyai jā a' Śatapatha III, 3 4, 18). In connection with this we should also see the remarks made by the commentator Durgācārya

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15. पुनस्त्वा दुरप्सरसः पुनरिन्द्रः पुनर्भगः
पुनस्त्वा दुर्विश्वे देवा यथानुमदितोऽससि ॥AV.VI, 111,4
रथजितम् रथजितेयीनामप्सरसामयं स्मरः ।
देवाः प्रहिणुत स्मरमसौ मामनु शोचतु ॥ 130,1.

16. यद्धस्ताभ्यां चकृम किल्बिषाण्यक्षाणां गत्नुमुपलिप्समानाः ।
उग्रम्पश्ये उग्रजितौ तदद्याप्सरसावनु दत्तमृणां नः ॥ 118,I (See notes 8, 63 & 100)

17. न यत्पुरा चकृमा कद्ध नूनमृता वदन्तो अनृतं रपेम ।
गन्धर्वोऽ अप्स्वप्या च योषा सा न नाभिः परमं जामि तन्नौ ॥
RV.X,10,4.
रपद्गन्धर्वीरप्या च योषणा नदस्य नादे परि पातु मे मनः ।
इष्टस्य मध्ये अदितिर्निधातु नो भ्राता नो ज्येष्ठः प्रथमो वि वोचति॥
11,2

18. समुद्रिया अप्सरसो मनीषिणमासीना अन्तरभि सोममक्षरन् ।
ता ईं हिन्वन्ति हर्म्यस्य सक्षणिं याचन्ते सुम्नं पवमानमक्षितम् ॥
IX. 78, 3

19. अप्सरा जारमुपसिष्मियाणा योषा बिभर्ति परमे व्योमन् ।
चरत्प्रियस्य योनिषु प्रियः सन्त्सीदत्पक्षे हिरण्यये स वेनः ॥
X,123,5

on Nir. V, 13,[20] viz., that 'the Apsarases are so called because they habitually move in waters their dear element.' Monier-Williams in his Sanskrit-English dictionary voices this opinion when on the word Apsaras, he remarks "(going in the water or between the waters of the clouds) ; ....they ....are said to have been produced at the churning of the ocean."

Is it not obvious from the profuse testimony of the Vedas given above, that the word 'Apsaras' primarily means some subtle diffusive energy like electricity, otherwise called lightning—vidyut?

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20 अप्सराः कस्मात् ? उच्यते । सा हि अप्सारिणी भवति । अपः प्रति नित्यमेव सरति तत्प्रभवत्वात् । तदेव तस्याः प्रियमुदकम् ॥ Nirukta V, 31.

आणीव रथवेष्टसि वने वारिवर्षण्ये । वसुका सूर्यवर्चसिनी वशिनी मन्मना भूयाः ॥ Kāṭhaka Gṛhyasūtra, Appendix IV, Dr. Caland's edition, Lahore p.299, st. 13. Devapāla comments on this as follows:—आणीव । आणी ईषा रथकाष्ठिका । हे वधु त्वमाणीव रथवेष्टसि रथव्यापिनी यथा रथाव्यभिचारिणी तथा मयि भूयाः । पवित्रावशब्द उपमायाम् । तथा वने मेघे वारिवर्षण्ये विद्युल्लता यथा अव्यभिचारिणी मेघं विना न दृश्यते तथा मयि भूयाः । वारि वर्षत्पतत् नयत्यनुमापयतीति वारिवर्षण्या तडित् । अप्सराश्च सेत्याहुः....॥

यासा उपरि तिष्ठति वने वारिवर्षण्ये । अप्सराः सूर्यवर्चसिनी वशिनी मन्मना भूयाः ॥ 14 ॥ Devapāla............यासौ तडिद्रूपधारिणी अप्सरा उपरि तिष्ठति........॥

In Gaṛhwāl, near Badrīnāth, in the Himālayas, high peaks are provided with iron tridents which the ignorant folk there worship as gods, whereas they are merely lightning conductors. There is also a tradition prevalent in these parts that on these high peaks of the mountains आच्छरी—Apsarases, dwell, and hence, the wearing or dis-

The word 'Apsaras' in the Brāhmaṇas.

There are very scanty references to the word 'Apsaras' in the Brāhmṇas. By far the largest number of these are found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. This hoary ritualistic work comments on the texts, Yajurveda XV, 15-19 in VIII, 6, 1, 16-20, and Yajurveda XVIII, 38-43 in IX, 4. 1, 7-12 but makes no effort at all to interpret[21] the terms Gandharva' and 'Apsaras' occurring in them. It only applies the texts to sacrificial ritual which obtained vogue in Bhāratavarṣa long after its fall into sectarianism and meaningless, nay, very often immoral and horrid ritualism. These and some other Brahmanic texts are of little use in arriving at the correct interpretation of Vedic terms.

The word 'Apsaras, in classical Sanskrit literature.

Classical Sanskrit literature however is rich in these myths and their attempted interpretations,[22] both of them inseparably and almost irretrievably jumbled together. In the Kādambarī of Bāṇabhaṭṭa, Mahāśvetā is represented as relating to prince Candrāpīḍa that there are fourteen families of Apsarases according to their

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play of red clothes or anything red, and the playing of musical instruments is harmful and hence prohibited. This information was kindly supplied by P. Pītāmbara Śāstrī of the Lalchanda Sanskrit Research Library, D. A. V. College, Lahore, the Punjab, for which hearty thanks are due to him.

21. तस्य (अग्नेः) ओषधयोऽप्सरसः ॥ Śatapatha Br. IX, 4, 1, 7. This is a mere repetition of the original Vedic text.

22. See the portions italicised above in the list based on Mahāśveta's account.

parentage or source.[23] The fourteen are as following:— (1) *Born of the mind of Brahman.* (2) *Produced from the Vedas.* (3) *Sprung from Thermic Energy (fire).* (4) *Born of the wind (Dynamic, Gastric, or Vital Energy).* (5) *Produced from 'nectar' while the ocean was churned by the gods.* (6) *Sprung from water.* (7) *Produced from the rays of the sun.* (8) *Produced from the rays of the moon.* (9) *Sprung from the earth.* (10) *Produced from lightning.* (11) *Created by Death.* (12) *Produced by Cupid.* (13) *and* (14) *Born of Muni and Ariṣṭā, two of the many daughters of Prajāpati Dakṣa by their unions with Gandharvas.*

"The Apsarases are the celebrated nymphs of Indra's heaven. The name, which signifies 'moving in the water,' has some analogy to that of Aphrodite.

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(23) ....विबुधसद्मनि अप्सरसो नाम कन्यकाः सन्ति ।...............तासां चतुर्दश कुलानि । एकं भगवतः कमलयोनेः मनसः समुत्पनम् । अन्यद् वेदेभ्यः सम्भूतम् । अन्यद् अग्नेः उद्भूतम् । अन्यत् पवनात् प्रसूतम् । अन्यद् अमृतात् मथ्यमानाद् उत्थितम् । अन्यद् जलात् जातम् । अन्यद् अर्ककिरणेभ्यः निर्गतम् । अन्यत् सौदामिनीभ्यः प्रवृत्तम् । अन्यत् मृत्युना निर्मितम् । अपरं मकरकेतुना समुत्पादितम् । अन्यत्तु दक्षस्य प्रजापतेः अतिप्रभूतानाम् कन्यकानां मध्ये द्वे सुते मुनिः अरिष्टा च बभूवतुः ताभ्यां गन्धर्वैः सह कुलद्वयं जातम् ॥

(Kādambarī of Bāṇa with the commentary of Siddhacandra and Bhānucandra, Nīrṇayasāgara Press, Bombay 19:6).

The Vāyupurāṇa also mentions fourteen Apsarases. (Vide n. 8.) There is, however, no similarity between the two accounts. That given in the Kādambarī seems to be more scientific and older. It should be noted, however, that according to the Kādambarī the Apsarases came into being in thirteen different ways among which production from the ocean while the Gods churned it, is only one. *This is production of electricity by friction.* This tale is told in Padmapurāṇa, III Brahmakhaṇḍa, Chs. 9 & 10. (See Ānandāśrama edn. of 1894).

They are not prominent in the Vedas but Urvaśī and a few others are mentioned. In Manu they are said to be the creations of the seven Manus In the epic poems they become prominent, and the Rāmāyaṇa and the Purāṇas attribute their origin to the churning of the ocean. It is said that when they came forth from the waters neither the gods nor the Asuras would have them for wives, so they became common to all. They have the appellations of Surāṅganas, 'wives of the gods', and Sumad-ātmajas 'daughters of pleasure.'

"Then from the agitated deep up sprung
The legion of Apsarases, so named
That to the watery element they owed
Their being. Myriads were they born, and all
In vesture heavenly clad, and heavenly gems:
Yet more divine their native semblance, rich
With all the gifts of grace, of youth and beauty.
A train innumerous followed; yet thus fair,
Nor god nor demon sought their wedded love:
Thus Rāghava: they still remain - their charms.
The common treasure of the host of heaven."

Rāmāyaṇa (Wilson).

In the Purāṇas various gaṇas or classes of them are mentioned with distinctive names. The Vāyu Purāṇa enumerates fourteen, the Harivaṃśa seven classes. They are again distinguished as being daivika, 'divine', or laukika, 'worldly'. The former are said to be ten in number and the latter thirtyfour, and these are the heavenly charmers who fascinated heroes, as Urvaśī, and allured austere sages from their devotions and penances, as Menakā and Rambhā. The Kāśī-khaṇḍa says "there are thirty millions of them, but only one thousand and sixty are the principal." The Apsarases then, are fairylike beings, beautiful and voluptuous. They are the

wives or the mistresses of the Gandharvas, and are not prudish in the dispensation of their favours. Their amours on earth have been numerous, and they are the rewards in Indra's paradise held out to heroes who fall in battle. They have the power of changing their forms; they are fond of dice, and give luck to whom they favour. In the Atharvaveda they are not so amiable; they are supposed to produce madness (love's madness), and so there are charms and incantations for use against them. There is a long and exhaustive article on the Apsarases in Goldstücker's Dictionary, from which much of the above has been adapted. As regards their origin he makes the following speculative observations:—'Originally these divinities seem to have been *personifications of the vapours which are attracted by the sun and form into mist or clouds*; their character may be thus interpreted in the few hymns of the Rigveda where mention is made of them. At a subsequent period..... (their attributes expanding with those of their associates the Gandharvas), they became divinities which represent phenomena or objects both of a physical and ethical kind closely associated with that life (the elementary life of heaven)."[24]

The above account is to be accepted with great caution and reservation for it is merely an assertion of the available untrustworthy myths and not the result of a critical sifting of them.

The word 'Gandharva'. Etymology of—

'Apsaras' is a feminine generic term and as such has its exact concomitant in 'Gandharva' a masculine generic term the derivation[25] of which signifies something that supports, upholds, or furthers,

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24. 'A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology', by John Dowson, Trübner, 1914, pp. 19 and 20. Italics ours.
25. See 31.

speech, speed, the earth, etc., and hence may mean the sun, a cloud, or some such phenomenon of Nature, or some thing or being of such a nature. The Vedic texts referred to already in connection with the word 'Apsaras' contain also the word 'Gandharva' which means 'the sun'[26] 'a cloud'[27] 'miasma of disease' or disease spreading germs',[28] etc., and 'vital energy'.[29]

Macdonell on the word 'Gandharva'.

Macdonell however complains regarding the word 'Gandharva' that "the evidence of the Ṛgveda is........so scanty and vague that no certain result as to its definite original character is attainable......He is found in fathomless space of air (RV. 8 66. 5) ...He is the lover on whom the Apsaras smiles (10. 123. 5)...Thus he is brought into relation with the sun, 'the golden-winged bird,' the 'messenger of Varuṇa' (10. 123. 6)...He is possibly also associated with the rainbow (ib.)...He is pierced by Indra in the regions of air." (8. 66. 5). (Pp. 136 and 137). "They (the Apsarases) are expressly called wives of the Gandharvas (10. 10. 4; AV. 2. 2. 5)...... ......The Apsaras is also doubtless meant by the aqueous nymph (apyā yoṣā)... ......The goddesses accompanying the Gandharva Viśvāvasu are described as *connected with clouds, lightning and stars* (AV. 2.2 4)."[30]

It is a pity, having delved so deep, Macdonell should fail entirely to secure his quarry. His translating 'apyā yoṣā' into 'water nymphs', and the portion italicised by us above viz., 'connected with clouds lightning and stars are proofs positive that he

26. AV. II, 2, 4, See n. 11.
27. AV. II, 2, 5, See n. 11.
28. AV. IV, 37, See n. 12.
29. Vide note n. 15.
30. Macdonell's "Vedic Mythology", Trübner, Strassburg, Germany 1897, pp. 126, 127 and 124.

very nearly approached his quest, but failed to recognise what he had almost got into his groaping, trembling unsteady hands, simply on account of his innate prejudice : Pride goes before the fall they say and Macdonell's fall is the consequence of his pride : His criticism is a misfire, at best, from a gun well aimed but just lowered a bit at the time of explosion :

The etymology[31] of the word 'Gandharva' comes to our rescue in this difficult situation. Macdonell knew the etymology of this word but his presumption of superior knowledge prevented his taking advantage of his own knowledge :

In Atharvaveda II, 2, 4 already referred to the word Gandharva is used to denote the sun. In IV, 37, XIX, 36, 6; VIII, 5, 13 and XII, 1, 50,[32] it means '*miasmata of disease produced by stinking, rotting matter that gives out offensive, sickening smells*', as contrasted with 'Apsaras'—*motile, changing, splitting (?), spreading, 'amoeba-like'*[33] *germs infesting water, food materials, habitations, trees and*

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31. गाम्-पृथिवीं पृथिवीस्थान्प्राणिनश्च जलवर्षणेन धरति धारयति वा इति, कृगृशृदृभ्यो वः Uṇādi I, 155=गो + √धृञ् धारणे + व=गन्धर्वः, according to Pāṇini, VI, 3, 109 पृषोदरादीनि यथोपदिष्टम्. See also the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam VIII, 6, 1, 20 : यद्वाग्वसुरित्याहातो (=पर्जन्यात्) ह्यर्वाग्वसुर्वृष्टिरन्नं प्रजाभ्यः प्रदीयते. Vide Yajurveda XV, 19, quoted in note 8.

32. See notes 12 and 13.

33. Strangely enough the English word 'amoeba' from Greek source seems to be an exact equivalent in spite of its etymology. Cf the Vedic word अमीवा involving the idea of 'disease' and 'motion—change' as signified by अप्सरस् and गन्धर्व.

The word amoeba is said to be formed of Greek 'a-moibe' meaning change. If 'a' and 'moibe' are two elements fused together in the process of formation, then of course, the word has nothing to do with the Vedic अमीवा,

plants, in short, everything useful to life and every place where life thrives: In XII, 1, 23 'Gandharva' means some '*terrigenous product endowed with fragrance*' as contrasted with 'Apsaras' which stands for similar but '*lush products*',[34] In RV. VIII, 77 5,[35] Gandharva' means a cloud. In IX, 113, 3[36] the word stands for some 'aerial' or such other natural phenomenon. In X, 85, 40[37] and 41, 'Gandharva' denotes the 'corporal

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formed from the root √अम रोगे (to sicken) and the termination वन् according to Uṇādi, I, 152, इणशिभ्यां वन्. But if the first part in the Greek word is 'am' and not 'a' as supposed in the above etymology, then of course it is directly related to the Vedic word. The Vedic word अमीवा means 'a germ or germs causing disease'. See AV. I, 28, 1. The Greek 'amoibe' is said to mean change, which sense persists in the adjective 'amebean' meaning 'alternately or reciprocally responsive'. 'Amebeum' means 'a poem in the form of a dialogue, as the third eclogue of Vergil; also a song sung responsively'. (See the Oxford, Webster's New International or the New standard Dictionary.)

34. यस्ते गन्धः पृथिवि सम्बभूव यं बिभ्रत्योषधयो यमापः । यं गन्धर्वा अप्सरसश्च भेजिरे तेन मा सुरभिं कृणु मा नो द्विक्षत कश्चन ॥ AV. XII, 1, 23.

35. अभि गन्धर्वमतृणादबुध्नेषु रजः स्वा । इन्द्रो ब्रह्मभ्य इद्वृधे ॥ RV. VIII, 77, 5.

36. पर्जन्यवृद्धं महिषं तं सूर्यस्य दुहिताभरत् । तं गन्धर्वाः प्रत्यगृभ्णान्तं सोमे रसमादधुरिन्द्रायेन्दो परिस्रव ॥ RV. IX, 113, 3.

37. सोमः प्रथमो विविदे गन्धर्वो विविद उत्तरः । तृतीये अग्निष्टे पतिस्तुरीयस्ते मनुष्यजाः ॥ सोमो ददद्गन्धर्वाय गन्धर्वो ददग्नये । रयिं च पुत्रांश्चादादग्निर्मह्यमथो इमाम् ॥ RV. X, 85, 40; 41.

The Saṃvarta Smṛti (Poona, Ānandāśram edition) p. 414, st. 64 is worth quoting here. It runs:—रोमकाले तु

energy or capacity which attains gradual development in a young girl till she grows up to be a woman and becomes fit to be a mother'. In 123, 4[38], it again signifies a cloud, in 136, 6[39], it stands for the 'olfactory sense' as contrasted with 'Apsaras' denoting 'eyesight', in 139, 4[40] and 5 it means the sun and in 177, 2,[41] it stands for the 'vital energy' called प्राण. In YV. II, 3, and XXIX, 13[42], it denotes thes un, and in XVII, 32[43], it means vital energy also. In XXIV, 37[44] it means singing birds. In Atharvaveda

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सम्प्राप्ते सोमो भुङ्क्ते तु कन्यकाम्। रजो दृष्ट्वा तु गन्धर्वः कुचौ दृष्ट्वा तु पावकः ॥

38. जानन्तो रूपमकृपन्त विप्रा मृगस्य घोषं महिषस्य गमन्। ऋतेन यन्तो अधि सिन्धुमस्थुर्विदद्गन्धर्वो अमृतानि नाम ॥ RV. X, 123, 4.

39. अप्सरसां गन्धर्वाणां मृगाणां चरणे चरन्। केशी केशस्य विद्वान्त्सखा स्वादुर्मदिन्तमः ॥ RV. X, 136, 6.

40. विश्वावसुं सोम गन्धर्वमापो ददृशुषीस्तदृतेन व्यायन्। तदन्ववैदिन्द्रो रारहाण आसां परि सूर्यस्य परिधीरपश्यत् ॥ विश्वावसुरभि तन्नो गृणातु दिव्यो गन्धर्वो रजसो विमानः। यद्वा घा सत्यमुत यन्न विद्म धियो हिन्वानो धिय इन्नो अव्याः ॥ RV. X, 139, 4, 5.

41. पतङ्गो वाचं मनसा बिभर्ति तां गन्धर्वो अवदद्गर्भे अन्तः। तां द्योतमानां स्वर्यं मनीषां ऋतस्य पदे कवयो निपान्ति ॥ RV. X, 177, 2.

42. गन्धर्वस्त्वा विश्वावसुः परि दधातु विश्वस्यारिष्ट्यै YV. II, 3. यमेन दत्तं त्रित एनमायुनगिन्द्र एणं प्रथमोऽ अध्यतिष्ठत्। गन्धर्वोऽ अस्य रशनामगृभ्णात्सूरदश्वं वसवो निरतष्ट ॥ Y. V. XXIX, 13.

43. विश्वकर्मा ह्यजनिष्ट देव आदिद्गन्धर्वो अभवद्द्वितीयः। तृतीयः पिता जनितौषधीनामपां गर्भं व्यदधात्पुरुत्रा ॥ YV. XVII, 32.

44. अन्यवापोऽर्धमासानां ऋश्यो मयूरः सुपर्णास्ते गन्धर्वाणामपा-

XI, 5, 2,[45] the Gandharvas are said to be 6333. On this the account given in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI, 6, 3[46] (Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad III 9), is worth noting. It is said that in those hoary days somewhere about the time immediately before[47] the Mahābhārata war a discussion regarding the number of the devatas took place between the great Yajurvedic scholar Yājñavalkya and Vidagdha Śākalya another scholar belonging to the opposite party. Yājñavalkya gave a number of figures from one to three thousand and three, adding that these were the

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मुद्रो मासान् कश्यपो रोहित्पु[illegible] तेऽ[illegible]सां मृत्यवेऽसितः ॥ YV. XXIV, 37.

45. ब्रह्मचारिणम्पि[illegible]ो देवजना[illegible] अनु संयन्ति सर्वे । गन्धर्वा एनमन्वायंस्त्रयस्त्रिंश[illegible] षट् सहस्राः सर्वान्त्स देवांस्तपसा पिपर्ति ॥ AV. XI, 5, 2.

46. अथ हैनं विदग्धः शाकल्यः पप्रच्छ कति देवा याज्ञवल्क्येति, स हैतयैव निविदा प्रतिपेदे यावन्तो विश्वेदेवस्य निविद्युच्यन्ते त्रयश्च त्री च शता त्रयश्च त्री च सहस्रेति । ओमिति होवाच । कत्येव देवा याज्ञवल्क्येति । षडिति । ओमिति होवाच । कत्येव देवा याज्ञवल्क्येति । द्वाविति । ओमिति होवाच । कत्येव देवा याज्ञवल्क्येति । अध्यर्ध इति । ओमिति होवाच । कत्येव देवा याज्ञवल्क्येति । एक इति । ओमिति होवाच । कतमे ते त्रयश्च त्री च शता त्रयश्च त्री च सहस्रेति । स होवाच महिमान एवैषामेते । त्रयस्त्रिंशत्त्वेव देवा इति ॥ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam XI, 6, 3.

47. एतन्मयाप्तं जनकात्पुरस्तात्तेनापि चाप्तं नृप याज्ञवल्क्यात् । ज्ञातं विशिष्टं न तथा हि यज्ञा ज्ञानेन दुर्गं तरते न यज्ञैः ॥ Mahābhārata, Sāntiparvan, Chapter 323. This is Bhīṣma's statement relating what he had heard of the discussion between Yājñavalkya and king Daivarāti Janaka who flourished sometime before the great Mahābhārata war. Vide P. Bhagavaddatta's 'Vaidika Vāṅmaya ka Itihāsa' in Hindi Part II, about the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas, p. 75.

extension and source[48] of the power of the actual thirty-three.[49] The six thousand three hundred and thirtythree are simply the extension of the One Omnipotent, Omnipresent Gandharva eulogised in AV. II, 2, 1 and 2[50]. In YV. XVIII, 38-43[51] the thermic energy, the sun, the moon, air, philanthropic works and the mind, are all called Gandharvas. This is a good clue to the true signification of the term.

Yajurveda IX. 7[52] very clearly interprets this aspect of the word 'Gandharva'. It says:—"The twentyseven entities, the supporters of this universe, pervade space like air and move with speed like that

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48. See the last bit of note 46, above:—महिमान एवैषामेते। The 6333 of the Atharvaveda and the 3306 of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa are the extensions of the one, three, and thirty-three mentioned later, and these latter are the source of the former.

49. कतमे ते त्रयस्त्रिंशदिति। अष्टौ वसवः एकादश रुद्राः, द्वादश आदित्याः, ते एकत्रिंशत्, इन्द्रः चैव प्रजापतिः च त्रयस्त्रिंशत् इति॥ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa XI, 6, 3, 5.

50. दिव्यो गन्धर्वो भुवनस्य यस्पतिरेक एव नमस्यो विक्ष्वीड्यः। तन्त्वा यौमि ब्रह्मणा दिव्य देव नमस्ते अस्तु दिवि ते सधस्थम्॥ दिविस्पृष्टो यजतः सूर्यत्वगवयाता हरसो दैव्यस्य। मृडाद्गन्धर्वो भुवनस्य यस्पतिरेक एव नमस्यः सुशेवः॥ AV. II, 2, 1; 2.

51. Stanza 38. अग्निः...गन्धर्वः...ओषधयः...अप्सरसः॥
Stanza 39. सूर्यः....गन्धर्वः...मरीचयः...अप्सरसः॥
Stanza 40. चन्द्रमाः...गन्धर्वः...नक्षत्राणि...अप्सरसः॥
Stanza 41. वातः...गन्धर्वः...आपः...अप्सरसः॥
Stanza 42. यज्ञः...गन्धर्वः...दक्षिणाः...अप्सरसः॥
Stanza 43. मनः...गन्धर्वः...ऋक्सामानि...अप्सरसः॥

52. वातो वा मनो वा गन्धर्वः सप्तविंशतिः। तेऽ अग्रेऽ श्वमायुञ्जंस्तेऽअस्मिञ्जवमादधुः॥ YV. VII, 9.

of the mind..................." Here Sāyaṇa, Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara, interpret सप्तविंशतिगन्धर्वाः to mean 'nakṣatrāṇi'[53] the stars or planets.

Other and later uses of the word 'Gandharva' seem to connote some faculty, power or being, endowed with various passions or properties from love for women down to the appreciation of fragrance, form, colour or sound[54]. But in spite of all this the word bids fair to be rendered into 'a cloud'[55] or the 'sun' and the former must be acknowledged to be the primary sense and all the others secondary, just as lightning[56] or electricity is the primary sense of the word 'Apsaras.' This conclusion can easily be arrived at by the following unusual syllogism :—

∵ The lightning[57] is said to be the wife of the cloud,
∵ The Apsaras[58] is said to be the wife of the (1) Gandharva,
∴ The Apsaras is lightning, and (2), the Gandharva is a cloud.

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53. सप्तविंशतिर्नक्षत्राणि, says Uvaṭa. सप्तविंशतिर्नक्षत्राणि गन्धर्वा गोभूमेर्धर्तारः says Mahīdhara. Vide Yajurveda XVIII, 40, on p. 7 and note 9.

54. नैनं घ्नन्त्यप्सरसो न गन्धर्वा न मर्त्याः । सर्वा दिशो विराजति यो बिभर्तीमं मणिम् ॥ AV. VIII, 5, 13. Clouds and lightning can have no adverse influence upon him—his health.

55. See the renderings of Atharvaveda II, 2, 1 in the Resume.

56. Vide note 15.

57. इष्टान्देशाञ्जलद विचर प्रावृषा सम्भृतश्रीर्माभूदेवं क्षणमपि च ते विद्युता विप्रयोगः ॥ नीत्वा रात्रिं चिरविलसनात्खिन्नविद्युत्कलत्रः.........॥ Meghadūta of Kālidāsa II, 54; I, 38.

58. ......गन्धर्वपत्नीभ्योऽप्सराभ्योऽकरं नमः ॥ AV. II, 2, 5.

But curiouly enough, the Taittirīya Saṁhitā clearly mentions this fact in III, 4, 7, 2 in the explicit words : पर्जन्यो गन्धर्वस्तस्य विद्युतोऽप्सरसो रुचः. Can anything be clearer than this ? It is strange, Sāyaṇa, Uvaṭa, Mahīdhara, Griffith and Macdonell could not see this !

So much about the generic terms Apsaras and Gandharva.

Now we come to the consideration of particular terms, chief among which is Urvaśī reputed to be the name of a 'paramount' Apsaras : It is not known how many of these Apsarases there are for the vicious imagination of the debased poets of Bhāratavarṣa of the days of her fall, failed to take a census in time of the people with whom they peopled the imaginary heaven of Indra, another creation of their imagination. But the following incomplete[59] list may be taken to be something better than nothing:—Urvarā, Miśrakeśī, Rambhā, Urvaśī, Alambuśā, Ghṛtācī, Citrā, Citrāṅgadā, Ruci, Manoharā, Sukeśī, Sumukhī, Hāsinī, Prabhā, Vidyutā, Praśamī, Dāntā, Vidyotā, Rati, etc. This list does not mention Menakā, Pañcacūḍā, Vidyutparṇā, etc., hence it cannot but be incomplete. Nay, it is a mere drop in the ocean, for such a respectable, celestial monarch as the imaginary Indra of the poets referred to above,

The Apsarases in particular. Their number not exactly known.

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(59) यथोर्वरा मिश्रकेशी रम्भा चैवोर्वशी तथा। अलम्बुषा घृताची च चित्रा चित्राङ्गदा रुचिः ॥ मनोहरा सुकेशी च सुमुखी हासिनी प्रभा। विद्युता प्रशमी दान्ता विद्योता रतिरेव च ॥ एताश्चान्याश्च वै बह्वयः प्रनृत्ताप्सरसः शुभाः । अवादयंश्च गन्धर्वा वाद्यानि विविधानि च ॥ Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparvan, Ch. 50, 47—49. A larger list is given in Ādiparvan, Ch. 132. Vide also notes 8; 21 and *pp.* 14-16 above.

cannot be satisfied with such a small number of 'courtezans', otherwise called 'demireps', to adorn his vast harem and court.

Urvaśī.

One of this great number is Urvaśī the reputed heroine of many a myth that has supplied the cause to many a poet of Bhāratavarṣa to let lose his mule of fancy to run wild to the great detriment of the real signification of the ancient legend. The following story refers to her degradation to mortal existence under a curse:—"Having renounced their persons both Nimi and the pious Vasiṣṭha, having asceticism for their wealth, were metamorphosed into air. Thereupon being thus deprived of his body the highly effulgent and great ascetic Vasiṣṭha went to the Patriarch Brahmā with the object of acquiring from him another. Being merged in the air, he, conversant with religion, bowed unto his father and said:—"O illustrious god of gods: O thou lotus-sprung by the imprication of Nimi I have been now deprived of my body and been converted into air. O Lord, the state of being bodiless is highly painful to all. The bodiless cannot perform any work; do thou, therefore, by they favour, grant me another body." "Where-to the self-sprung Brahmā, of unmitigated prowess, replied. "O great one, do thou enter into the vital energy of Mitra and Varuṇa; and even then, O foremost of twice-born ones, thou shalt not be born of a woman and being greatly pious shalt attain to the rank of a patriarch." The Patriarch Brahmā having said this, Vasiṣṭha, saluting and circumambulating him, repaired to the region of Varuṇa. At that time Mitra in conjunction with Varuṇa was reigning in Varuṇa's kingdom being worshipped by all celestials. Meanwhile encircled by her mates the leading Apsarā Urvaśī arrived there at her pleasure.

Beholding the frolicsome and beautiful Urvaśi, Varuṇa attained to an excess of delight. Therefore he expressed his intention of living with that queen of Apsarases having a moonlike countenance and lotus-eyes. Thereat Urvaśī, with folded hands, said:—"O lord of celestials, Mitra himself has already invited me for the same." Being stricken by desire Varuṇa said to Urvaśī, "I shall discharge my vital energy into this pot if thou dost not wish to live with me." Hearing those sweet words of the Patriarch Varuṇa, Urvaśī was highly pleased and said:—"Do what thou hast said. Now my body is under the possession of Mitra—but my mind is attached unto thine and thou art equally attached unto me." Urvaśī having said this, Varuṇa discharged his vital energy into the pot. Thereupon Urvaśī approached Mitra. And thereat highly enraged he said to her:—'I invited thee first; O thou of vicious actions, why hast thou, renouncing me, secured another. For this vile action, thou shalt, by my curse live in the land of mortals for some time. The royal saint Purūrava, the king of Kāśī, is the son of Budha. Do thou go to him O thou of a vicious intellect; he shall be thy husband."[60]

"She (Urvaśī) was seen and loved by Purūravas, the son of Budha by the daughter of Manu, and agreed to live with him on certain conditions. She said: "I have two rams which must always remain near me day and night; you must never be seen by me undressed, and I must eat only ghi, or clarified butter." The inhabitants of heaven were anxious for Urvaśī's return, so the Gandharvas came by night

60. From Manmathanath Shastri Dutt's translation of the Rāmāyaṇa Section LXVI, pages 1741-1743. The whole of the Sarga 56 of the seventh or Uttarakāṇḍa is devoted to this.

and stole her rams; as Purūravas in his attempt to rescue them rushed into Urvaśi's room undressed, a flash of lightning filled the room, and being seen by the nymph, the condition under which she consented to remain with him being broken, she returned to heaven. Purūravas was distracted at the loss of his bride, and wandered about searching for her; when he found her, she promised to meet him yearly and present him with a son. After five annual visits she told him that if he would offer a sacrifice with the express object of gaining her, his effort would be successful. He made the attempt, became a Gandharva, and gained eternal possession of her love."[61] This is the story of her earthly sojourn and Purūravas's conversion to Gandharvaism. Purūravas must have been a man of 'grit'—wonderful strength of character and conviction that his beloved wife should take so many years till the birth of six sons to be able to convert him to her own way of life: The birth of one son a year also is a record business, and as these people are immortal they must be going on with their business still, unless the levity[62] of an Apsaras's life has already dissolved the union.

The source of this myth.

While explaining the etymology of the word Urvaśī as formed of the two parts, viz., उरु, meaning much and root अश् to pervade or वश् to have control, Yāska[63] very pithily and directly hints at the

61. From 'Hindu Mythology, Vedic and Puranic' by W. J. Wilkins, published by Thacker, Spink & Co., Bombay, 1882, pp. 402, 403.

62. या (अप्सरसः) तपोविशेषपरिशङ्कितस्य सुकुमारं प्रहरणं महेन्द्रस्य ॥ Vikramorvaśīyam I. नियमविघ्नकारिणी मेनका नामाप्सराः प्रेषिता ॥ Śakuntalam, I.

63. उरु अभ्यश्नुते = is very pervasive; उरुभ्यां अश्नुते=

above myth and lays bare its Vedic source, which a stanza from the Ṛgveda thus adumbrates.

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pervades by means of two extensive powers or faculties or expanses, &c. These two powers are the positive and negative forces of electric energy. Here the dual अप्सरसौ used in Yajurveda XV, 15—19 (Vide note 8) is significant. Ordinarily the word अप्सरस् is used only in the plural even when it is in apposition to a noun in the singular. बहुवचनान्तोऽयं शब्दः । इत्यमरः says the famous शब्दकल्पद्रुम. Hence the dual has a special purpose. Vide also:—मद्देवपत्नी ग्राप्सरसावधीतम्, Atharvaveda, VI, 118, 3. उरु + √अशूङ् व्याप्तौ + इन्, Uṇādi IV, 118, सर्वधातुभ्य इन् + ङीप्=उर्वशी. Or dissolved as a compound as follows:—उरुः वशः यस्याः सा=she whose power of endurance, suffering, working or accomplishing things is great=उरु + वश + ङीप्=उर्वशी. उर्वश्यप्सरा उर्वभ्यश्नुत उरुभ्यामश्नुत उरुर्वा वशोऽस्याः । अप्सरा अप्सारिण्यपि वाप्स इति रूपनामाप्सातेरप्सानीयं भवत्यादर्शनीयं व्यापनीयं वा । स्पष्टं दर्शनायेति शाकपूणिर्यदप्स इत्यभक्तस्याप्सो नामेति व्यापिनस्तद्रा भवति रूपवती तदनयात्तमिति वा तदस्यै दत्तमिति वा । तस्या दर्शनान्मित्रावरुणयो रेतश्चस्कन्द तदभिवादिन्येषर्ग्भवति, so says Yāska in his Nirukta V, 14 on Ṛgveda VII, 33, 11. On this स्कन्दमहेश्वर comment:—नित्यपक्षे तु उर्वशी विद्युत् । वसिष्ठः अपि आच्छादितः उदकसङ्घातः ।.......... मित्रावरुणाभ्याम् वाय्वादित्याभ्यां आकृष्टः ।......उदकसङ्घातः उर्वश्याः... उर्वन्तरिक्षव्यापिन्याः विद्युतः......उत्पन्नः.

This is a scientific truth. "Water was considered a simple substance till 1782, when the Honourable Henry Cavendish showed it to be a compound body, formed of the union of two gases—Oxygen and hydrogen. He showed that when these two gases, mixed in a certain proportion, were caused to enter into chemical union *by the agency of the electric spark*, drops of moisture were formed on the inner surface of the vessel. The French chemist, Lavoisier, confirmed this observation by a reverse process, namely, by splitting up water into the two ele-

"Water, the most essential for life, the source of the aliment of all creatures, is, indeed produced from the air with its compound of hydrogen and oxygen,[64] by the power of electricity in the form of lightning. When it is diffused in the form of vapour in the atmospheric region the sun's rays keep it collected there to be showered later on the earth in the form of rain."[65]

This is a great scientific truth and very well stated. But the words 'drapsam[66] skannam' in the

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ments of which it is formed. *When an electric current is passed through water contained in a tube,*............the water is decomposed into its elements, which appear as bubbles of gas at the terminals or poles of the wire. One gas is given off at the positive pole, namely, oxygen, and collects in that end of the tube, the other gas, hydrogen, is given off at the negative pole, and collected in that limb of the tube." (The Household Physician, M'Gregor-Robertson, Gresham's, London): urvaśī madhyamasthānā vidyut. Skanda-Maheśvara on Nir. XI, 49. In the Nirukta of Yāska, Ch. V, Ss. 13 and 14; Ch. VI, S. 1; and Ch. VIII, Ss. 1 and 2, etc., treat of the production etc., of electricity.

64. प्राणो वै मित्रः ॥ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam, VI, 5, 1, 5; VIII, 4, 2, 6; XII, 9, 2, 12; प्राणापानौ मित्रावरुणौ ॥ Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇam, VI, 10, 5; IX, 8, 6; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇam III, 3, 6, 9; प्राणो वै मित्रो अपानो वरुणः, Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam VIII, 4, 2, 6; XII, 9, 2, 12; प्राणोदानौ वै मित्रावरुणौ ॥ Śatapatha Brāhmaṇam I, 8, 3, 2; III, 6, 1, 16; V, 3, 5, 34; IX, 5, 1, 56 'Hydrogen' is an equivalent of अपान or उदान, more accurately of अपान, and 'oxygen' of प्राण.

65. उतासि मित्रावरुणो वसिष्ठोर्वश्या ब्रह्मन्मनसोऽधिजातः । द्रप्सं स्कन्नं ब्रह्मणा दैव्येन विश्वे देवा पुष्करे त्वाददन्त ॥ Ṛgveda, VII, 33, 11.

66. √दृप् + स on the analogy of वृतृवदिवचि etc; Uṇādi III, 62. Or √धृञ् धारणे, or √दृ विदारणे + √प्सा भक्षणे + अच् = द्रप्सः. Cf. the English word 'drop'.

original misinterpreted by old commentators gave rise to this myth. The first word 'drapsa' simply means something which rejoices creatures greatly or something that is first broken asunder and diffused and then collected as evaporated water is known to be. The following text from the Ṛgveda makes this clear:—"Urvaśī, the lightning, which frequently flashes forth falling down and profusely bearing rain water, pure, most beneficial to agricultural produce, desirable, beneficent to man, fulfills my (= the human being's) long cherished wishes."[67] "May Urvaśī, the praiseworthy lightning, the gatherer of herds of elephants in the form of groups of clouds, bless us with a plentiful downpour of rain, and thus helping us with abundance of water, may this charming phenomenon, be of good service to us for the growth and protection of good, healthy articles of food, by covering up and preserving for us the water thus brought down (by a process of evaporation in the atmospheric region for further showers.)"[68] "When the watery vapour in the clouds, by the action of the flashes of lightning, begins to give up its former form by coming into contact with hydrogen and oxygen released in the air in the atmosphere, then it is the first birth of (water and when it is carried down to

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67. विद्युन्न या पतन्ती दविद्योद्भरन्ती मे अप्या काम्यानि । जनिष्टोऽअपो नर्यः सुजातः प्रोर्वशी तिरत दीर्घमायुः ॥ Ṛgveda, X, 95, 10.

विशेषेण द्योतते देदीप्यते इति विद्युत् । Durgācarya on Nirukta V, 14. This very useful bit, it is a pity, has been relegated to the "*variae lectiones*" in the footnotes in Professor V. K. Rājawāde's scholarly edition of the Nirukta published by the Ānandāśrama, Poona.

68. अभि न इळा यूथस्य माता स्मन्नदीभिरुर्वशी वा गृभ्णातु । उर्वशी वा बृहद्दिवा गृणानाभ्यूर्ण्वाना प्रभृथस्यायोः ॥ Ṛgveda, V, 41, 19.

the world of human beings by the sun, this latter is the second birth of) this most beneficent[69] element."

In the last stanza translated above there is a pun upon the word 'janman' which according to Nighaṇṭu I, 12 means water. 'Vasiṣṭha' also means 'water' (vide n. 63).

In the Devībhāgavata and the Harivaṁśa Urvaśī is said to have sprung from the thigh of Nārāyaṇa.[70] This interpretation is contrived to explain the etymology of the word, but there is a mistake in it, for 'Urvaśī' has 'uru' with the first 'u' short for its first member, and not 'ūru' with the first 'ū' long, for, in this latter case, it should have been 'Ūrvaśī' and not 'Urvaśī'.

In RV. X, 95, 6[71], Urvaśī's companions are said to be:—

Sujūrṇī, Śreṇī, Sumna āpi, Hṛde cakṣuḥ, Granthinī, Caraṇyu; on which Griffith is compelled to say : 'they are compared to red kine meaning perhaps, *bright flashes of lightning* followed by the lowing or bellowing of thunder."

So much about the word 'Urvaśī'. Now postponing the drawing of the necessary conclusion from

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69. विद्युतो ज्योतिः परि सञ्जिहानं मित्रावरुणा यदपश्यतं त्वा । तत्ते जन्मोतैकं वसिष्ठागस्त्यो यत्त्वा विश आ जभार ॥ Ṛgveda VII, 33, 10.

70. इति सञ्चिन्त्य मनसा करेणोरुं प्रताड्य वै ।
तरसोत्पादयामास नारीं सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरीम् ॥
नारायणोरुसम्भूता ह्युर्वशीति ततः शुभा ।
ददृशुस्ताः स्थितास्तत्र विस्मयं परमं ययुः ॥ Devī Bhāgavata, IV, 6, 35 & 36.

71. या सुजूर्णिः श्रेणिः सुम्न आपिर्हृदे चक्षुर्न ग्रन्थिनी चरण्युः । ताऽअञ्जयोऽरुणायो न सस्नुः श्रिये गावो न धेनवोऽनवन्त ॥ Ṛgveda X, 95, 6.

the above discussion till the consideration of the other correlated terms also is over, we pass on to the next important word in our selection.

The word Purūravas.

Purūravas is said to have been a king, son of Budha and Ilā, and the founder of the lunar dynasty–candra or soma vaṁśa. He is the human consort of the celestial nymph Urvaśī in the famous myth referred to above. There may be some truth in this account but the etymology of the word suggests a different story.

With पुरु much and रु[72] to make sound, we get पुरूरवस्; पुरुरावन् and substituting बृहत् or महत् for their synonym पुरु we have बृहद्रवः, महारवः etc., all of which have some semblance to the 'Boanarges'[73] of the New Testament. 'As it makes much noise',—बहुधा रोरूयते—Purūravas is a cloud according to Yāska.[74] Here Durga and Skanda Maheśvara the commentators take

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72. पुरु + √रु शब्दे + असि, Uṇādi IV, 232, पुरूरवाः= पुरूरवाः । बहुधा रोरूयते, Nirukta X, 46. Vide, बृहद्रवाः in Yajurveda V, 22, बृहन्नसि बृहद्रवाः, on which Uvaṭa and Mahīdhara observe : बृहन्महान्रवो ध्वनिर्यस्य सः, which is quite parallel to पुरूरवाः and determines the sense of the latter. In this sense पुरुरावन् in पुरुराव्णो रिषस्पाहि Yajurveda, III, 48, VIII, 27 and XX, 18 is noteworthy, the sense being 'creating scandal, sensation, gossip', or 'raising an outcry among the public ?

73. "And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them *Boanerges*, which is, the sons of Thunder." The Gospel of Mark, Chapter III, 17.

74. By बहुधा रोरूयते Yāska means the cloud, but Durgācārya later on in 47 inserts the words मेघेन सह after रवाय and spoils the whole.

Purūravas to mean[75] the air—वायु as it produces various sounds like thunder. But between 'thunderer' and 'cloud' there is no difference besides the cloud also is a body of gas—वायु.

Another name for Purūravas is Aiḷa—the son of Iḷā. Now we have to see who this Iḷā is. In the Amarakośa, irā, bhū, vāk, surā,[76] are given as

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75. Skanda-Maheśvara clearly say वायुः प्राण एव पुरूरवाः, which is confusion worse confounded. See the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā III, 9, 5 also. उर्वश्यसीति वाग्वा उर्वशी। पुरूरवा असीति प्राण एव पुरूरवा। तन्मिथुनमायुरसीति समनक्ति तस्मि-न्नेव मिथुने रेतो दधाति॥ मैत्रायणी संहिता ३।६।५॥ उर्वश्यस्यायु-रसि पुरूरवा असीति माता वा उर्वश्यायुर्गर्भः पिता पुरूरवा रेतो घृतं यद्घृते-नारणी समनक्ति मिथुन एव रेतो दधाति॥ काठकसंहिता २६।८॥ See also Kapiṣṭhala Katha-Saṃhitā 41, 5.

76. ऐळ means son or descendant of इळा (इळायाः अपत्यम्=इळा+अण्=ऐळः). इळा and इडा are identical for the Bahvṛcas read ळ for ड and ळ्ह for ढ when ड and ढ come between vowels (अज्मध्यस्थ डकारस्य ळकारो बह्वृचा जगुः। अज्म-ध्यस्थढकारस्य ळ्हकारो वै यथाक्रमात्॥).

About Iḍā we have the following myth:—"In the Ṛgveda Iḍā is primarily food, refreshment, or a libation of milk; thence a stream of praise, personified as the goddess of speech. She is called the instructress of Manu, and frequent passages ascribe to her the first institution of the rules of performing sacrifices. According to Sāyaṇa, she is the goddess presiding over the earth. A legend in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa represents her as springing from a sacrifice which Manu performed for the purpose of obtaining offspring. She was claimed by Mitra-Varuna, but remained faithful to him who had produced her. Manu lived with her, and praying and fasting to obtain

What is Iḷā. ?

synonyms and Maheśvara[77] comments on this identifying इडा with इला. The Nighaṇṭu[78] also gives इरा and इला in the list of synonyms of अन्न—'food'. Hence according to these authorities इरा and इला are

offspring, he begat upon her the race of Manu. In the Purāṇas she is the daughter of the Manu Vaivasvata, wife of Budha (Mercury), and mother of Purūravas. The Manu Vaivasvata, before he had sons, instituted a sacrifice to Mitra and Varuṇa for the purpose of obtaining one; but the officiating priest mismanaged the performance, and the result was the birth of a daughter, Iḍā or Ilā. Through the favour of the two deities her sex was changed, and she became a man, Su-dyumna. Under the malediction of Śiva, Su-dyumna was again turned into a woman, and, as Ilā, married Budha or Mercury. After she had given birth to Pururavas, she, under the favour of Vishṇu, once more became Su-dyumna, and was the father of three sons. According to another version of the legend, the Manu's eldest son was named Ila. He having trespassed on a grove sacred to Pārvatī, was changed into a female Ilā. Upon the supplications and prayers of Ilā's friends, Śiva and his consort conceded that the offender should be a man one month and a female another. There are other variations in the story which is apparently ancient". (From "The Hindu Classical Dictionary", by John Dowson). See the Padma Purāṇa, V Sṛṣṭikhaṇḍa, Ch. 8.

77. शम्या शतह्रदा ह्रादिन्यैरावत्यः क्षणप्रभा। तडित्सौदामिनी विद्युच्चञ्चला चपला अपि ॥ Amarakośa, I, 3, 9. On this the commentator Maheśvara says:—शम्या, शतह्रदा, ह्रादिनी, ऐरावती, क्षणप्रभा, तडित्, सौदामिनी। सुदाम्ना अद्रिणा एकदिक्। अथवा सुदाम्नि मेघे भवा। अण् प्रत्ययः। सुदामा तु पुमान्वारिधरपर्वतभेदयोः इत्युक्तत्वात्। सौदामिनी, विद्युत्, चञ्चला, चपला, दशकं विद्युल्लतायाः।......Also see I, 1, 49—note 80 below.

78. Nighaṇṭu, II, 7.

synonymous with भूमि, वाक् and अन्न. There is an old shabby principle[79] which, sometimes, does not observe any difference between र and ल, so that इरा and इला may, for all purposes, be taken to be identical. Thus therefore, इला also being a name for water, Aila, the son of Ilā can easily be said to be a cloud. Hence it is that a cloud also is called ऐरावत and अभ्रमातङ्ग, i. e., 'an elephant in the form of a cloud'.[80] Lightning

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79. रलयोरभेदः, i. e., "there is no difference between र and ल." This is one of the many fictitious phonetic principles that were got up by sectarians to justify their inability to pronounce Sanskrit (especially Vedic Sanskrit) sounds correctly and also to support fanciful interpretations of Vedic texts. The wretched rule वबयोरभेदः seems to have its origin in Dravidian medley, for example, the word for 'cart' in Tamil is—वण्डि, but in Kanarese, another Dravidian language, it is—बण्डि ! 'He has come' in Tamil is वन्दिरुक्किरान्, in Kanarese बन्दिरुत्ताने. These principles had better be discarded now, but the strangely unprogressive mentality of the modern Sanskritists holds out no hopes of any reasonable reform in such matters. This is an instance of what is called '*Acyrology*' broadly speaking, that is, incorrect use of language. We hold that इरा, इला and इडा are derived from different roots but are synonyms.

80. See the शब्दकल्पद्रुम on ऐरावती:—इरा जलानि विद्यन्तेऽस्य इरावान् मेघः तस्य इयम्—इरा+मतुप्+अण्, तस्येदम् P. IV, 3, 120+ङीप्) विद्युत्। विद्युद्विशेषः। इति मेदिनी। ऐरावतभार्या। इत्यमरटीकायां स्वामी। वटपत्रीवृक्षः। इति राजनिर्घण्टः। पञ्चालदेशीयनदीविशेषः। अधुना रावी इति ख्याता। (उत्तरमार्गे नक्षत्रविशेषाणां संज्ञाभेदो यथा। पुष्पश्लेषा तथादित्या वीथी चैरावती स्मृता॥

ऐरावतोऽभ्रमातङ्गैरावणाभ्रमुवल्लभाः, Amarakośa I, 1, 49.

On this the commentator Maheśvara has:—ऐरावतः, अभ्रमातङ्गः, ऐरावणः, अभ्रमुवल्लभः, इति चत्वारि ऐरावतस्य.

also is called ऐरावती.[81] In RV. V, 63, 6[82] इरावती is used as an adjective qualifying वाचम्. The Siddhānta Kaumudī comments on Uṇādi II, 85 saying that इरा is synonymous with मद्य and वारि. The Vaijayantī[83] also gives इरा, भू, वाक्, सुरा and अम्बु; and इरा, शीधु, कश्यम्, कल्या, and शुण्डा as synonymous.

Hence we may safely conclude that इडा, इळा, इरा and इला, are all identical and mean water. Hence Aila (इलाया पुत्रः=इला+अण्=ऐल) means a son or descendant of इला—'water', i. e., 'a cloud'.

We now take up the words Parvata and Nārada. The former is very largely used in the Vedas in the sense of a cloud. For example we have the following from the Yajurveda:—

The words Parvata and Nārada.

"From above the cloud (parvatasya) surcharged with water and of itself discharging its waters, ships propelled upwards move fast. When flying lower they, following the cloud itself, in the atmospheric region, themselves fully imitate the cloud. Oh king! thou art blessed with overwhelming valour by God Omnipresent. In the vast atmospheric region thou movest in various ways, thou canst even cross over to the starry region".[84]

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81. Vide note 77 above.

82. वाचं सु मित्रावरुणाविरावतीम्पर्जन्यश्चित्रो वदति त्विषीमतीम् । अभ्रा वसत मरुतः सुमायया द्यां वर्षयतमरुणामरेपसम् ।। Ṛgveda, V, 63, 3.

83. इराभूवाक्सुराम्बुषु । Vaijayantī of Yādavaprakāśa p. 220, l. 8. शीधुकश्यमिराकल्या शुण्डा देवी परिस्रुता ।—Ibid.—p. 139, l. 39. इरा मद्ये च वारिणि । Siddhānta-Kaumudī.

84. प्र पर्वतस्य वृषभस्य पृष्ठान्नावश्चरन्ति स्वसिच इयानाः । ताऽआववृत्रन्नधरागुदक्ताऽअहिं बुध्न्यमनु रीयमाणाः । विष्णोर्विक्रमणमसि विष्णोर्विक्रान्तमसि विष्णोः क्रान्तमसि ॥ Yajurveda X. 19.

The latter word Nārada, occurs only in the Atharvaveda some six times, thrice in the Nominative and thrice in the Vocative, and means a righteous leader. Hence it seems to be a vocable of the phase of the Brahmanic and Sūtra (?) literature of Sanskrit. Probably it is even later, i. e., belongs to the Purāṇic age. With regard to this word, however, we are not on slippery ground, though the matter is difficult being totally unexplored by critics till now.

We find it necessary to append a short account of the mythical sage Nārada here from Sir Monier-Williams' well known Sanskrit-English Dictionary.

The sage Nārada.
An account of—

"Nārada—(*Etymology uncertain*). Name of a Ṛishi or rather Devarshi (i. e. Ṛishi among the gods) regarded in the Veda as a descendant of Kaṇva and author of certain hymns of the Ṛgveda (VIII, 13; IX, 104; 105), *often associated in the later mythology with Parvata,* (he appears on the earth like Mercury, as a messenger from the gods to men or vice versa. and is reckoned among the ten Prajāpatis as a son of Brahmā (Manu I, 35) from whose forehead he is said to have been produced; in the modern mythology he is a friend of Kṛishṇa and is regarded as the inventor of the Vīṇā or lute; in epic poetry he is occasionally called a Deva-gandharva, 'divine Gandharva', or a Gandharva-rājan, 'king of the Gandharvas' or simply Gandharva."

Monier-Williams says that the etymology of the word 'Nārada' is uncertain : This is simply another way of saying that he either could not understand it or did not seriously try to find it out. Anyhow his remark cannot deter others from trying to trace it. In the famous Śabdakalpa-

Etymology of the word Nārada.

druma under the word Nārada a stanza[85] from some ancient work is quoted which purports to say that Nārada is so called because his duty is always to offer water (tarpaṇam) to the manes of the ancestors of his clients (?). In this derivation the first part of the word 'nāra' is severed from the full form and treated as itself formed from either the root 'nṛ' or 'nī'. The next part 'da' is got from the root 'dā' to give This method is not new. The compiler of the current Bhārgavī Manusmṛti was well acquainted with it, for he gives a full etymology of the word 'Nārāyaṇa' at the very start[86] of the work, in the following words:—"Waters are designated by the word 'Nāra', for waters (Nārāḥ) are the descendant (or sons) of Nara. Waters formed the vehicle[87] of him in the very beginning, hence he is remembered as 'nārāyaṇa'='he who has 'Nāra' for his vehicle'.

'Nāra' in other words.

There are other words having 'nāra' for their first member in all of which it has the same signification, viz., 'water'. (1) Nāraṅga[88] or Nāryaṅga is an orange, and is so called because it is juicy.

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85. नारदः—नारं परमात्मविषयकं ज्ञानं ददातीति। दा+कः। यद्वा नारं नरसमूहं द्यति खण्डयति कलहेनेति। दो+कः। नारं जलं ददाति पितृभ्य इति वा। तदुक्तम्—नारम्पानीयमित्युक्तं तत्पितृभ्यः सदा भवान्। ददाति तेन ते नाम नारदेति भविष्यति॥

86. आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ता आपो वै नरसूनवः। ता यदस्यायनं पूर्वं तेन नारायणः स्मृतः॥ Bhārgavī Manusmṛti, I, 10.

87. "........And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The Old Testament, Genesis, I, 2.

88. Uṇādi I, 122 सृवृत्रोर्वृद्धिश्च. On this the commentator Jayakṛṣṇa (Siddhānta-Kaumudī part II) says:—बाहुलकात् नृ नये। अथ नारंगः पिप्पलो रसे। यमजप्राणिनि विटे नागरंगद्रुमेऽपि च। इति मेदिनी.

(2) The cocoanut—'*cocos nucifera*'—is called 'Nārikera' or 'Nārikela' because it contains water.

(3) The water elephant (tapir?) is called 'Nārāca'[89] because it loves water and very much likes always to be in it.

'Nārada' is called a 'devarṣi'—a divine sage, and this perhaps is the reason why he is represented as coming preceded by light—lightning: The following occurs in the Vikramorvaśīyam[90]:—

Purūravas (looking up)—How is it we have a flash of lightning in a clear cloudless sky?

Urvaśī (looking up)—Oh it is the lord Nārada.

In the Śiśupālavadham[91] he appears under the clouds and lightning precedes him.

Now along with these we have to consider the following points:—

(a) In the Matsyapurāṇa[92] Nārada is called a

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89. नारं जलम् आचामति—नार + √चमु अदने+ड Pāṇini III, 2, 101 अन्येभ्योऽपि दृश्यते=नाराचः. This is the logical sequence of the above interpretation.

90. Vide Vikramorvaśīyam I, 1.

91. श्रियः पतिः श्रीमति शासितुं जगत् जगन्निवासो वसुदेवसद्मनि । वसन्ददर्शावतरन्तमम्बराद्धिरण्यगर्भाङ्गभुवम्मुनिं हरिः ॥ गतं तिरश्चीनम- नूरुसारथेः प्रसिद्धमूर्ध्वज्वलनं हविर्भुजः । पतत्यधो धाम विसारि सर्वतः किमेतदित्याकुलमीक्षितं जनैः ॥ चयस्त्विषामित्यवधारितं पुरा ततः शरी- रीति विभाविताकृतिम् । विभुर्विभक्तावयवं पुमानिति क्रमादमुं नारद इत्य- बोधि सः ॥ नवानधोऽधो बृहतः पयोधरान्समूढकर्पूरपरागपाण्डुरम् । क्षणं क्षणोत्क्षिप्तगजेन्द्रकृत्तिना स्फुटोपमं भूतिसितेन शम्भुना ॥ The Śiśupālavadha of Māgha Canto I stanzas 1—4.

92. तुम्बुरुर्नारदश्चैव गन्धर्वौ गायतां वरौ ॥ Matsyapurāṇa 136, 4.

93. The Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Jīvānand Vidyāsāgar's edition Calcutta, 1888, Kṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa, pp. 76 and 125. See also Brahmakhaṇḍa p. 1006.

Gandharva and associated with the Gandharvas.

(b) In the Brahmavaivarta, Kṛṣṇajanmakhaṇḍa[93] it is said that Nārada in his former life was a Gandharva named Upabarhaṇa.

(c) In the Aitareya[94] Brāhmaṇa and other works he is always mentioned in company with Parvata.

(d) There are many legends in which Nārada is closely associated with the Gandharvas and Apsarases.[95]

(e) Like the cloud he also is called a messenger "the messenger of the gods."[96]

Can we not conclude now, from these testimonies, that 'Nārada' = Gandharva = Megha = a cloud ? The myth of the imaginary sage wandering between the celestial and terrestrial regions singing and playing upon his lute—Vīṇā, running errands between human, divine and semi-divine imaginary beings, causing many a strife[97] and doing much harm as well as good to many of his 'clients' and often getting himself bluffed and snubbed in the process, are all tales invented to explain scientific truths to the "*rabblement with chapped hands*"[98], that always clamour after such things to be presented to them in the

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94. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇam VI, 13, 34; VIII, 21.

95. Vikramorvaśīyam. In the Mahābhārata, Anuśāsanaparvan (Kumbhakonam edition) 73, 2; 3, Nārada is represented as wishing to know from the Apsaras Pañcacūḍā about the crooked nature of the female sex—women. The passage is obscene in the extreme, the ebullition of a vitiated mind, the hater of women and a womaniser.

96. See Monier-Williams' account of Nārada on p. 37.

97. The *S*abdakalpadruma says:—narasamūham kalahena khaṇḍayati iti nāradaḥ (vide n. 85).

98. "...the rabblement hooted and clapped their chapped hands". Casca in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, I, 2. The Home Library Club Bombay, edition, 1939, page 863 Col. 2, ll. 39 & 40.

easiest, most attractive and interesting manner possible that would kindle their cupidities and tickle their sensualities.[99]

RESUMÉ.

ORIGIN AND HABITATION OF THE APSARASES.

Generally speaking all the Apsarases are said to be produced from water. The Śabdakalpadruma quotes a stanza from the Rāmāyaṇa to the effect that they sprang from the water of the ocean when it was churned by the gods (Vide n. 23 end) as it is also

99. In all such myths, at least in mediaeval Indian literature, truth and fiction, history and legend, are amalgamated, nay jumbled together. Purūravas and Urvaśī were real historical persons. So were Nārada, Menakā, Śakuntalā, etc. But the so-called court poets (chief of whom is the poet laureate), or speaking more correctly, literary hacks who were hired to compose anything they could and their patrons liked, to panegyrise the latter, got hold of all old wives' tales and incorporated them into a motley whole along with the real incidents of the lives of their patrons. That is how we have got so many voluminous poems in Sanskrit with very little stuff in them of real historical or ethical value. The predominent note of most, if not of all of these, seems to be to picture womanhood in the worst possible colours and vilify woman for all ages. Base woman haters, and womanisers, they did not try to understand what untold harm their wretched works would do to posterity. Another thing to be noted in connection with these myths is the use of Vedic terms in them, especially as proper names, e. g., the words 'Purūravas' and 'Urvaśī'. This is explained in the extant text of the manusmṛti, I, 21:— सर्वेषां तु स नामानि कर्माणि च पृथक् पृथक् । वेदशब्देभ्य एवादौ पृथक्संस्थाश्च निर्ममे ॥ Purūravas, the king, and Urvaśī his wife, were both historical and human, but the Gandharva and Apsaras, fictitious.

told in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. The Kādambarī of Bāṇa, however, mentions fourteen families of them, produced in thirteen different ways, one for example, from the mind of Brahma, *another from water, a third from lightning* (vide n. 23) and so on. Monier-Williams in his Sanskrit-English Dictionary, thus remarks on the word Apsaras:—"('going in the waters or between the waters of the clouds')………they………are said to have been produced at the churning of the ocean." The etymology of the word entirely agrees with this interpretation, as according to Uṇādi IV, 237, by joining together the noun 'ap' meaning water, the root 'sṛ' meaning to move, and the termination 'asi' the form thus evolved bears the sense 'moving in waters'. Yāska in his Nirukta, V, 14 has:—"apsarā apsāriṇī", on which Durga comments:—"apaḥ prati nityameva sarati……..tasyāḥ priyam udakam'. (Vide nn. 6 & 20). In Atharvaveda II, 2, 3, their abode is said to be 'samudra', and in 4 it is said to be in अभ्रिये नक्षत्रिये (vide n. 11). R. V. X, 10, 4 and 11, 2, call them अप्या: योषा:—water-nymphs (vide n. 17), In IX, 78, 3 they are समुद्रिया: अप्सरस: (vide n. 11). The Oxford English Dictionary defines nymph as:—"one of class of mythological semidivine maidens inhabiting sea, rivers, fountains, hills, woods or trees." There is a tradition prevalent in the neighbourhood of Badrīnārāyaṇa, Gaṛhwāl, in the Himalayas, that आच्छरी—Apsarases, dwell on the highest peaks of mountains and that red clothes etc., should not be displayed there and no drums and such other musical instruments played. On such peaks there are fixed iron tridents, which the people worship as sylvan and mountain deities, but in reality they are only lightning conductors (vide n. 20). In the Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra, edited by the late Dr. Wilhelm Caland, and

published by the Research Deptt. D. A. V. College, Lahore, Appendix IV, 13 we have : "......वने वारिवर्षण्ये ......" on which Devapāla comments:—"......वने मेघे वारिवर्षण्या विद्युल्लता...मेघं विना न दृश्यते...वारि वर्षत् पतत् नयत्यनुमापयतीति वारिवर्षण्या तडित्। अप्सराश्च सेत्याहुः...॥" Again in 14 next we have:—"यासा उपरि तिष्ठते वने वारिवर्षण्ये अप्सराः..." on which Devapāla says:—"यासौ तडिद्रूपधारिणी अप्सरा उपरि तिष्ठति..." (vide n. 20). Even the name of one Apsarā is 'Vidyutparṇā' (vide n. 8). The names 'Mahāśvetā' —very white or fair, Ghṛtācī' (घृतम् उदकम् अञ्चति प्राप्नोति इति—moving living or being in water), Citrā, Citrāṅgadā, Ruci, Prabhā, Vidyutā, Vidyotā (vide n. 59) are also significant. In RV. X, 95, 6, (vide n. 71), Sujūrṇī, Śreṇī, etc., etc., are said to be the companions of Urvaśī on which Griffith says:—"they are compared to red kine meaning perhaps, *bright flashes of lightning followed by the lowing or bellowing of thunder.*" (Vide p. 20).

Urvaśī herself is said to have been produced from the thigh of Nārāyaṇa (vide n. 70). In RV. X, 95, 10, she is compared to lightning thus:—विद्युन्न (इव) या (उर्वशी) दविद्योत् (द्योतते) (vide n. 67). Commenting on Nirukta V, 14, Skanda-Maheśvara say:—नित्यपक्षे तु उर्वशी विद्युत्, वसिष्ठोऽपि आच्छादितः उदकसंघातः (vide n. 63). On Nirukta XI, 49 the same commentators say:— उर्वशी मध्यमस्थाना विद्युत् (vide n. 63).

Hence from the above information we can only gather that Apsaras as well as Urvaśī are words meaning विद्युत्=lightning=electricity in its natural state. In Sanskrit we have only one word विद्युत् for both electricity and lightning.

THE CONSORTS OF THE APSARASES.

About Urvaśī herself there is a story that she came down from the celestial region to the terrestrial under the curse of Mitra and Varuṇa. Commenting on RV. VII, 33, 11, Yāska mentions the tradition

prevalent about Urvaśī's fall thus:—तस्याः दर्शनात् मित्रावरुणयोः रेतः चस्कन्द (vide nn. 6 & 63). रेतस् is a synonym for water (Nighaṇṭu I, 12), and मित्र in modern scientific language is 'oxygen' and वरुण, 'hydrogen' (vide n. 64), and उर्वशी is the 'electric spark'=विद्युत् which combines the two gases (n. 63). Under the power of the curse she becomes the wife of a human king Purūravas, lives with him for a considerable length of time, and then one of her conditions being violated, she departs. But Purūravas, somehow traces her, goes to 'Gandharvaloka' and himself becomes a Gandharva (see pp. 16 & 17). Nirukta X, 46 on the word Purūravas is important. It runs:—पुरूरवा बहुधा रोरूयते. तस्यैषा भवति. Then he quotes RV. X, 95, 7 and remarks:—समासत अस्मिन् जायमाने ग्रा गमनादापः देवपत्न्यः वा अपि च एनमवर्धयन्नद्यः स्वगर्ताः स्वयं गामिन्यः महते च यत्त्वा पुरूरवो रणाय रमणीयाय संग्रामाय अवर्धयन् दस्युहत्यायै च देवाः. In this passage पुरूरवस् clearly means a group of dark, thundering clouds, and their दस्युहत्या is the dispelling of water and food scarcity by showering plenty of rain. But Skanda-Maheśvara and Durga here, as elsewhere, have entirely lost sight of the main idea and mistaken पुरूरवस् for वायु—air, breeze, or storm. According to them बहुधा रोरूयते seems to guarantee this interpretation (vide nn. 72, 74 & 75). Another name of Purūravas is Aila (pp. 20—22). According to the Amarakośa, the Nirukta, the Vaijayantī, the Siddhānta Kaumudī, इरा, इला, इडा, and इळा are idencital (vide pp. 20—22, and notes thereon). These along with some other words are synonyms for water, food, the earth, speech, etc., so that इला being water, ऐल (इलायाः अपत्यम्) the son or descendant of इला—water, cannot but be a cloud. पुरूरवस्, पुरुरावा, बृहद्रवा, mean the same thing, namely, 'something that makes a great sound.' (Vide n. 72). पुरूरवस् is said to be मध्यमस्थानः, and a cloud is such, i. e., 'being and moving in the atmos-

pheric region'. This interpretation is more cogent, though the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā also prefers to take the word to mean, प्राण or वायु—dynamic energy (vide nn. 74 and 75). The Śabdakalpadruma (n.100) quotes a stanza from the Mahābhārata, viz., पर्वतश्च पुरुर्नाम यत्र यज्ञे पुरूरवाः...and remarks इति महाभारतोक्तवचनात् पुरौ पर्वते रौतीति वा. It is a well known fact that clouds rain profusely in mountainous regions. This also is an important scientific truth. In addition to this we have the story before us which says that Urvaśī (lightning) bore him (Purūravas) a son named Āyu. Now आयु is a word meaning water. Vide Nirukta X, 41, which explains the word आयोः in RV. IV, 23, 8, to mean अयनस्य, मनुष्यस्य, ज्योतिषः वा उदकस्य वा. When the wife is lightning and the son is water, it is but natural that the husband and father should be a cloud.

Generally between Gandharvas and Apsarases marital relation or something like that, is instituted in the available literature. In Atharvaveda II, 2, 5, the Apsarases are called गन्धर्वपत्नीः (vide n. 11). In the previous stanzas, and in Yajurveda XV, 15—19, XVIII, 38—43, etc., expressions are used which indicate close relationship between Gandharvas and Apsarases (vide nn. 11, 8, and 12, and pp. 11 and 12). We have seen above that Purūravas himself in the end became a Gandharva for the sake of Urvaśī. In the Meghadūta of Kālidāsa, II, 54, and I, 58 (n. 57) vidyut, lightning is said to be the wife of Megha, a cloud. Hence being the husband of lightning is equivalent to being a cloud. We may once more allude to the passage quoted above from the Kāṭhaka Gṛhya Sūtra and Devapāla's commentary thereon, in which close relation like that of husband and wife is clearly implied between वारिवर्षण्या विद्युत् or अप्सरा and घन or मेघ. The simile also is noteworthy. There are the lightning and the cloud on the one side and the

bridegroom and the bride on the other: So the comparison is complete. It should also be noted that in Yajurveda XV, 19, अर्वाग्वसु is called a Gandharva, and the Śatapatha Brahmana, VIII, 6, 1, 20, (n. 100) equates this word to 'parjanya' a rain cloud!

The Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, III, 9, 2 says पर्जन्यस्य विद्युत्पत्नी, and the Taittirīya Saṃhitā III, 4, 7, 2 in a clear equation:—सुक्षितिः सुभूतिर्भद्रकृत्सुवर्वान् पर्जन्यो गन्धर्वस्तस्य विद्युतोऽप्सरसो रुचः, declares 'Gandharva' to be a cloud.

ऐरावत masculine is a 'cloud' and ऐरावती feminine, 'lightning'. Again सुदामा masculine is 'cloud' and सौदामनी or सौदामिनी, feminine, is lightning, which information adds one more item to our list of evidence. (Vide n. 77).

DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ATHARVAVEDA II, 2, 1.

But it has to be admitted that this word cannot be confined to this signification alone. The following renderings of AV. II, 2, 1 will bear out our statement. The stanza runs thus:—

दिव्यो गन्धर्वो भुवनस्य यस्पतिरेक एव नमस्यो विक्ष्वीड्यः ।
तन्त्वा यौमि ब्रह्मणा दिव्य देव नमस्तेऽ अस्तु दिवि ते सधस्थम् ॥

(1) "Oh Divine Lord: through right knowledge do I approach Thee Who art of wouderful nature, the Supporter of all the worlds, the Sole Master of the universe and worthy to be adored and glorified by mankind. Obeisance to Thee: Bless me with Thy company in Thy most Sublime State".

(2) "The lustrous Sun, the one master of the solar system is, indeed, worthy of admiration and careful enquiry for mankind. Let me approach him—the most beneficent phenomenon of Nature in the celestial region, and try to study him carrying myself thither with all the faculties of my mind and observing him as he is in his own solar sphere".

(3) "The lustrous Moon, the unique protector of the terrestrial globe, is worthy of admiration and fit to be carefully studied by man. Let me approach her with all the faculties of my mind and study her as she is in her own lunar sphere".

(4) and (5) "The potent Thermic Energy (or Dynamic Energy) is the one unrivalled master of the world of creatures and is to be admired and studied carefully by man. Let me approach it with all the power of my mind and study it as it is in its own sphere".

(6) "The mighty Rain-cloud is the one unrivalled protector of the world of creatures, and hence is to be admired and studied carefully by mankind. Let me observe this mighty beneficent phenomenon of Nature concentrating all the powers of my mind on it, carrying myself to its own sphere of action by my imagination".

(7) "Oh Noble Soul of man! through right knowledge, let me approach thee who art of a wonderful nature, the sole master of thy miniature universe—the body—and worthy of being admired and realised by mankind. Obeisance to thee, oh divine being! Let me realise thee as thou art in thy own sphere".

(8) "The powerful, stinking, germs and miasmata, the carriers of epidemic disease, are the one cause of the decline and destruction of the world of living beings, and have therefore to be carefully investigated into, studied and destroyed. I and everybody else is bound to approach this subject with all the powers of the mind, grapple with it as it is in its own sphere, and endeavour to annihilate this fearful menace to life".

Of all these interpretations the sixth regarding the cloud, seems to be the most natural. The others can be coupled with it by way of metaphor.

THE WORD NĀRADA ALSO MEANS A CLOUD.

We have now to consider the word Nārada'. In Vikramorvaśīyam, Act V, Nārada is represented to be coming down from the celestial region preceded by lightning (vide p. 24). In the Śiśupālavadha, I, 1–4, he appears under the clouds and lightning precedes him (vide n. 91). In the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, the Purāṇas etc., Nārada is associated with Parvata (vide (p.22 & n.94). and Parvata is a cloud (vide n.84). He is a messenger between gods and men and is always wandering between the celestial and terrestrial regions (vide p. 22). He is often associated with the Gandharvas and Apsarases (vide nn. 92 & 95). Now look at the word Nārada itself. Manu says आपो नारा इति प्रोक्ता आपो वै नरसूनवः। ता यदस्यायनं पूर्वं तेन नारायणः स्मृतः ॥ (vide n. 86), which means, "waters are called नार, and as it forms the vehicle or conveyance of 'God' in the beginning of creation, He is called नारायण—he whose conveyance is नार". The Bible agrees with this view (vide n. 87). The Śabdakalpadruma, while explaining the word नारद quotes the following important stanza:—नारं पानीयमित्युक्तं तत्पितृभ्यः सदा भवान्। ददाति तेन ते नाम नारदेति भविष्यति ॥ i. e., "thou dost always offer water to the manes of our ancestors, hence thy name shall be Nārada'", (i. e., offerer of water—तर्पणम्—to the manes of the ancestors of his 'clients' etc., (vide n. 85). Monier-Williams complains that the *etymology of the word is uncertain.* But now look at the data: *res ipsa loquitur.* Can the conclusion be now resisted that the word 'Nārada' also means a cloud ?

For the first time in the history of Sanskrit literature has the meaning of the word 'Nārada' been decided in this brochure.

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Conclusion.

In the preceding pages we have unravelled the difficulties presented by only a few of the large number of names occurring in Vedic texts and creating confusion on account of their mythical associations. Indra, Vāyu, Mitra, Varuṇa and Agni are also connected with electricity. We shall deal with these in a separate treatise at some other time when our research into the matter concerning these is completed.

It should be understood from what we have stated above that this is only an infinitesimal bit of the vast field Vedic Mythology offers to the scholar for research. If such literary research were to be coupled with practical scientific experiment, it will not at all be an exaggeration to claim that we would not only discover many useful and new scientific principles of far reaching consequences but also invent many things useful to human life. Especially in the field of Medicine our research will amply pay.

Perhaps the time for such practical research has not as yet come in India. Perhaps it may never come, who knows ?

A side issue, though a very important one, of this research is to prove to the so-called 'Hindu', the genuine descendent of the ancient Vedic 'Arya', the surpassing excellence and supremacy of his hoary ancestral culture over all other human cultures, reminding him at the same time that "*all superstition, sentiment aad prejudices*" with which his 'Hinduism' is beset, "*are due to the neglect of the study of the Vedas and to the observance of the customs and ceremonies meaninglessly and to the study of Puranic literature*" as complains Pandit S. Narasimhacharya B. A., of Madras in his treatise on "A True Interpretation of Vedic Sacrifice."

THE END

Two kinds of electricity :— इन्द्रस्य हरी । Two horses of Indra. निघण्टु १।१५॥

इन्द्रः = स्तनयित्नुः = अशनिः = विद्युत् ॥ :—
स्तनयित्नुरेवेन्द्रः । श० ब्रा० ११।६।३।९॥ कतमः स्तनयित्नुरित्यशनिरिति । श० ब्रा० ११।६।३।९॥ यदशनिरिन्द्रस्तेन । कौ० ब्रा० ६।९॥ विद्युद्वा अशनिः । श० ब्रा० ६।१।३।१४॥

Additional Notes.

For some unforeseen difficulties the following matter could not be included in the foregoing pages.

100. In the Taittirīya Saṃhitā, V, 7, 15, 1, the expressions गन्धर्वान् छेपेन. अप्सरसो मुष्काभ्याम् occur. The dual मुष्काभ्यां with अप्सरसः is noteworthy. As we have already remarked in the text it is a clue to the fact that Electricity is positive and negative. (See n. 63).

On the word पुरूरवस् The Śabdakalpadruma says—
पुरूरवः—पुरु प्रचुरं यथा स्यात्तथा रौतीति । पर्वतश्च पुरुर्नाम यत्र यज्ञे पुरूरवाः ॥३।९०।२२॥ इति महाभारतोक्तवचनात्पुरौ पर्वते रौतीति वा । पुरु + रु + असि । उणादि ४ । २३१ पुरूरवाः इति असिप्रत्ययेन निपातनात्साधुः ॥

The peculiar association with पर्वत in the above is noteworthy.

The Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā III, 9, 5, has the following on the word उर्वशीः—

उर्वश्यसीति वाग्वा उर्वशी । पुरूरवा असीति प्राण एव । तन्मिथुनमायुरसीति समनक्ति । तस्मिन्नेव मिथुने रेतो दधाति ॥

The following is from the Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā, XXVI,7:

उर्वश्यस्यायुरसि पुरूरवा असीति माता वा उर्वश्यायुर्गर्भः पिता पुरूरवा रेतो घृतं यद्घृतेनारणी समनक्ति मिथुन एव रेतो दधाति ॥

These words occur also in the Kapiṣṭhala Kaṭha Saṃhitā, XLI, 5 but there the relative adverb यत् comes after घृतेनारणी and not after घृतम् as here.

What is अर्वाग्वसु ? The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says:—
अथ यदर्वाग्वसुरित्याहातो (=पर्जन्यात्) ह्यर्वाग्वसु वृष्टिरन्नं प्रजाभ्यः प्रदीयते ॥ ८ । ६ । १ । २० ॥

101. The following interesting passage occurs in Kāṭhaka Saṃhitā VIII, 2 :—तस्य (=अग्नेः) मरुतस्स्तनयित्नुना

हृदयमाच्छिन्दन्सा दिऽयाशनिरभवत् ।। That means there must be some अशनि of the other regions also, namely, अन्तरिक्ष and पृथिवी. Both स्तनयित्नु and अशनि mean lightning, electricity: —विद्युद्वाऽअशनिः ।। शतपथब्राह्मणम् ६।१।३।१४ ।। कतमः स्तनयित्नुरित्यशनिरिति ।। शतपथ० ११ । ६ । ३ । ९ ।।यदशनिरिन्द्रस्तेन।। कौषीतकि ब्राह्मणम् ६ । ९ ।। स्तनयित्नुरेवेन्द्रः ।। शतपथ० ११ । ६ । ३ । ९ ।।

102. The following passage from the Taittirīyopaniṣad is significant:—अथाधिज्योतिषम् । अग्निः पूर्वरूपम् । आदित्य उत्तररूपम् । आपः सन्धिः । वैद्युतः सन्धानम् ।। Here there is a relation instituted between water आपः and lightning वैद्युतः. The latter is called सन्धानम् something that unites, and the former आपः the result (सन्धिः) of such union! The language is rather cryptic and baffles attempt at clear rendering. It is always so where there is a mythical association. Max Müller rendered it as follows:—"...with regard to the heavenly lights. Agni (fire) is the former element, Āditya (the sun) the latter, water their union. That union takes place through lightning." (From Max Müller's translation of the Upaniṣads published by the Oxford University Press, S. B. E. Vol. XV, 1926 p. 46, ll. 19-22). Hume's heading for this 3rd Anuvāka of the first (śikṣā) vallī of the Taittirīyopaniṣad is:—"The mystic signification of combinations." His translation of the bit quoted above runs:—"...the luminaries. Fire is the prior form; the sun, the latter form. Water is their conjunction: lightning, the connection..........." (From Hume's trabslation of the Upaniṣads, Oxford University Press, 1934, p. 276, ll. 17-19). The difference between "conjunction and connection" is bereft of any distinction: Hume's rendering is not at all clear and is far inferior to Max Müller's. Hume failed to grasp the scientific note in the text, and merely substituted English words for the original Sanskrit. Like Griffith, the notorious "translator" of the Vedas, Hume seems to have set himself the ideal of rendering the text of the Upaniṣads into English in an equal number of words as, if not fewer than, the original contained. It does not seem to have

been the goal of either even to give a clear hint of the inner significance of the text concerned.

103. In 101 above we have noted "celestial electricity" दिव्याशनिः. Are the following instances of terrestrial electricity ? उदेह्यग्नेड अधि मातुः पृथिव्याः ॥ काठकसंहिता ७।१२ ॥ अग्निगर्भापृथिवी शतपथ १४।६।४।२१॥ साऽ(अदितिः=पृथिवी) अग्निं गर्भं बिभर्तु ॥६।५।१।११॥ पृथिव्यग्नेः पत्नी ॥गो० २।२।६॥

104. The following two references to Nārada may be taken for what they are worth:—एतद्ध स्म वाऽआह नारदो यत्र गां शयानां निर्जानाति मृतामेनामविद्वान्मन्यते ॥मैत्रायणीसंहिता १।८।२॥ एतद्ध स्म वाऽआह नारद इदं वा वाग्न्युपस्थानमासेति ॥१।५।८॥

105. The following are some of the names for the cloud:—

(1) मेघः—the cloud that showers profusely and fecundates the earth.

(2) घनः—the very large dark cloud, or a group of clouds, that ultimately must rain.

(3) पर्वतः—a huge dark cloud that darkens the day and generally does not rain quickly.

(4) नारदः—a cloud that yields a goodly shower in time.

(5) नमुचिः—a cloud that does not rain.

(6) जलन्धरः—a cloud that is replete with watery vapour but does not rain.

(7) कबन्धः—a cloud that keeps waters bound.

(8) जीमूतः—a cloud that showers ample rain.

(9 and 10) वृत्रः and अहिः are used in the Vedas chiefly for clouds that do not rain.

Of these, वृत्र, नमुचि, जलन्धर, and कबन्ध, are also the names of mythological beings called "Demons", or "Rākṣases".

These are only a few names. Research in Sanskrit mythological literature is necessary to gather more and detailed information about the clouds.

106. The Aphorism नाज्झलौ Aṣṭādhyāyī I, 1, 10, embodies a very comprehensive phonetic principle. The rule has not yet been exhaustively interpreted by commentators. It is composed of the five words न, अच्, अच्, हल्, and हल्, fused together according to the principle सरूपाणामेकशेष एकविभक्तौ ibid. I, 2, 64, and should be expanded in the style of Navyanyāya in some such way as follows:— तादात्म्यसम्बन्धावच्छेदकानवच्छिन्नौ अचौ हलौ तुल्यास्यप्रयत्नावपि परस्परं मिथो वा पूर्णसवर्णौ न स्तः i.e., "vowels and consonants which are not connected by the relation of identity are not completely similar to each other (=i.e., vowel to vowel or consonant to consonant or vowel to consonant) though they may be produced from the same place of utterance." E.g. इ, ई, च and छ्. इ is not completely similar to ई as the latter requires one mora more of time to pronounce than the former. च् is not completely similar to छ् as the latter is an aspirate. इ is not similar to च् because the former is a vowel and the latter a consonant. According to this interpretation र् can never be completely similar to ल्, व्, to ब्, प् to ख् etc. To ensure accuracy and purity of pronunciation this way of interpreting the above Aphorism is extremely necessary.

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